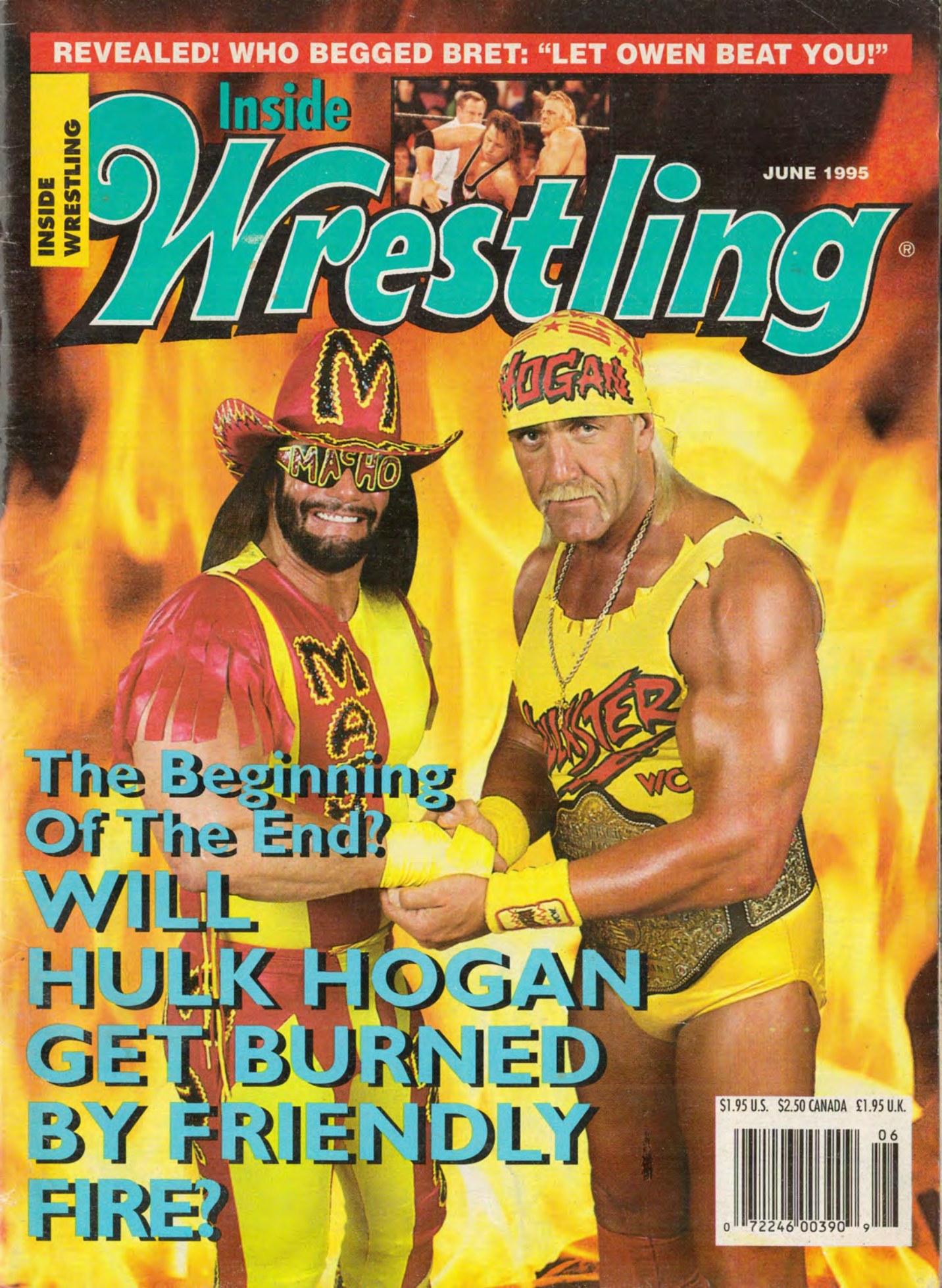
REVEALED! WHO BEGGED BRET: "LET OWEN BEAT YOU!"

INSIDE WRESTLING

Inside Wrestling®

JUNE 1995



The Beginning Of The End?

WILL HULK HOGAN GET BURNED BY FRIENDLY FIRE?

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Inside Wrestling®

THE MAGAZINE THAT RIPS THE LID OFF PRO WRESTLING

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Sincerely Yours

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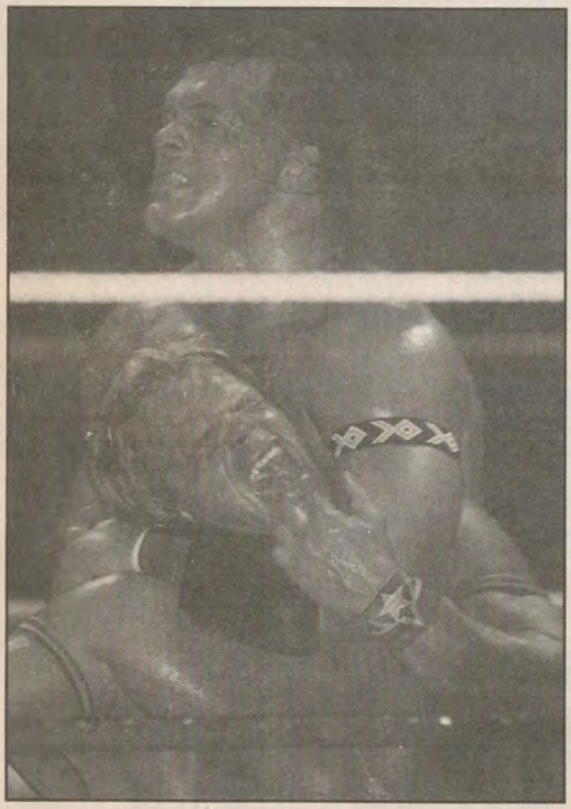
SPINE PROBLEMS

This is in response to the letter written by Lyle Williams ("Stop Hounding Lex!") in your March 1995 issue. No offense, Lyle, but how can you defend Lex Luger's consistently poor showing over the past few years? Luger has not won any WWF title as of yet. Despite this dismal track record, people still claim Luger is a great wrestler.



Lex Luger is holding his own in a feud with Tatanka, but that doesn't make him a superstar, says reader Kurt Schulz. He doesn't believe Luger deserves *any* WWF title shots.

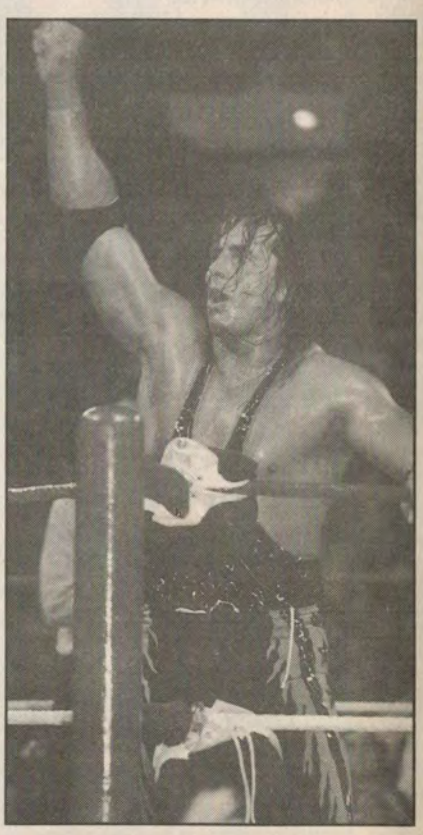
Allow me to spell it out for everybody: Luger is a colossal washout, not the "Total Package," as he was once called. Sure, he's built well and has talent, but he lacks one thing all athletes need: guts. That's right, he has no guts, no spine, no backbone. Even Hulk Hogan, whom I cannot stand, has some backbone (not much, mind you, but some). Promoters should forget about "wishy-washy" Luger. He doesn't deserve any title shots until he does something big. The promoters should give their attention to real wrestlers who have guts.

KURT SCHULZ
Benton Harbor, MI

HONORING HART

In your March 1995 issue, reader Richard Brown criticized INSIDE WRESTLING for naming Bret Hart the Wrestler of the Half-Decade ("Give Me A Break"). Brown mentioned no specific reason why he is not worthy of this honor. He didn't bother to suggest another superstar who may be more worthy of this honor. He also blasted Hart for his motto: "I'm the best there is, the best there was, and the best there ever will be."

Bret Hart just happens to be the only competitor in the history of the WWF to be a two-time World champion, two-time co-holder of the World tag team title, and two-time Intercontinental champion. He also won the 1993 King of the Ring and was the co-winner of the 1994 Royal Rumble. Hart owns victories over Roddy



Bret Hart deserved recognition as INSIDE WRESTLING'S Wrestler of the Half-Decade, writes Steve Nardi. He cites all Hart's accomplishments and all the great wrestlers he has beaten as proof.

Piper, Randy Savage, Ric Flair, Razor Ramon, and Shawn Michaels, and has beaten his brother Owen many times. And the only showboating I recall Bret doing is presenting his sunglasses to a child at ringside before every bout.

STEVE NARDI
West Berlin, NJ

CANINE CANDIDO

Chris Candido is "dogging" his duties as NWA champion. He rarely defends his belt, and when he does, it isn't against the top contenders. If Candido wants his title to be taken seriously, he should defend it every chance he gets. The first person I'd like to see get a title shot is Boo Bradley. Boo is beating Candido night after night in "loser-must-eat-dog-food" matches on Smoky Mountain cards. You would think that after just one taste of the wretched stuff, Candido would try his darnedest to beat Bradley. Maybe, like Bradley once was, Candido is used to being treated like a dog by Tamara Murphy Fytch. Maybe he doesn't think eating dog food is all that bad.

Come on, Candido. If you want to run with the big dogs of WCW and the WWF, get off the porch and defend your belt! The only way to gain the fans' respect is to earn it!

RICK BENDER
Nashville, TN

Chris Candido's inability to beat Boo Bradley and his refusal to grant Bradley an NWA title shot make him an embarrassment as NWA champion, according to reader Rick Bender.

THREE-RING CIRCUS

Is it just me, or is the WWF a circus and not a wrestling promotion anymore? In the past couple of years, the WWF has gone downhill fast. Just look at the current talent roster: It includes a zombie, clowns, a race-car driver, a garbage man, a country singer, rappers, a pig farmer, and a rock star. Ten years ago, the talent in the WWF was the best anywhere.

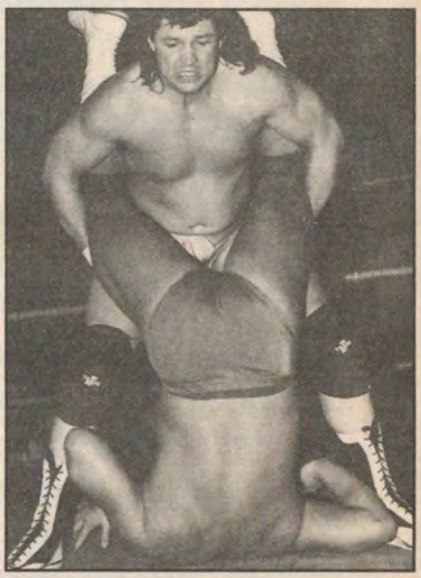
Vince McMahon says the WWF is about entertainment and fun. The real fans, though, still want to see wrestling action, not fireworks, loud music, or a fancy light show. I know the days of Jimmy Snuka, Roddy Piper, Junkyard Dog, Tito Santana, and others are long gone, but there must be some good talent out there somewhere just waiting for a break.

PHIL DODSON
Largo, FL

INSPIRATIONAL SNOW

After reading your story about Al Snow in your April 1995 issue ("Al Snow—Drifting Toward

(Continued on page 56)



Al Snow wrestled for more than a decade before he started to get recognized as an superb athlete. Reader Julia King is inspired by his perseverance.

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

By Stu Saks

I have a sneaking suspicion that a man like Ted Turner reads the magazine *Financial World.* If he doesn't, I'm sure that somebody on his staff does, and that person will make him aware of the feelings of his old buddy Vince McMahon, who compares his WWF to Turner's WCW in a February 14 article ("Viva Hulk!")by saying: "One is ice cream and the other is scooped up behind the elephant at the circus."

Hold on a second there, Vincent K.!

This is not exactly the best time to be dissing WCW. Have you checked your talent roster lately? Craig Peters reminds me that it's just about time to run our biannual in-depth comparison of the WWF and WCW in *Pro Wrestling Illustrated,* but I can't bring myself to kick McMahon while he's down.

But, Vinnie boy, if you're going to be making statements like that to the press ...

To put matters in perspective, there still are two major (not to be confused with major-league) wrestling promotions in this country. And, according to *Financial World,* the WWF generates between $100-million and $150-million in gross revenue, while WCW generates about $20-million. In truth, McMahon might not be out of line when he says, "The only business that has kicked Ted Turner's behind every day of the week is the WWF."

But, Vinster, a smart businessman tracks trends. And while WCW is in a growth pattern, the WWF is filling its cards with wrestlers whose biggest professional thrill had been filling out the last couple of pages of the "*PWI* 500." Don't look now, but that ice cream cone you spoke of is melting and Ted Turner, like the elephant in the circus, never forgets somebody who tries to make a fool of him.

NAMES MA

THE UNDERTAKER IS smiling (that's news in itself). The fact that **Sid Vicious** (or as he was last known in the WWF, **Sid Justice**) has agreed to return to the WWF makes the man from the dark side happy. Even though Sid's job is to be a bodyguard for **Shawn Michaels**, Undertaker has some "unfinished business with him," as **Paul Bearer** put it. Remember that Undertaker did have several chances to win the USWA title from Vicious in 1994, but was always stymied when Sid's friend **The Spellbinder** attacked him. Sid's second stint in the WWF could be a very painful one!

Dave Sullivan called to tell me that he would be glad to befriend **Brutus "The Butcher" Beefcake**, or, as people are calling him now, "The Man With No Name." As you know, Brutus had been allied with Dave's older brother **Kevin** in the **Three Faces of Fear** until a recent falling-out. The Faces of Fear are now reportedly trying to get **Bastion**

Booger to join their stable. With **Avalanche** and **Big Bubba Rogers**, who was on the verge of signing with the group at press time, on board, all the Faces would need is someone like **Big Van Vader** or **Yokozuna** to make theirs the heaviest wrestling stable in history!

I'm told that **Man Mountain Rock** and **Diesel** have gotten to be close friends in the WWF, and that Rock has told his friend that he'll be there if he needs him to thwart any attacks from Shawn Michaels, **Jeff Jarrett**, Sid Vicious, or **Owen Hart** ... **Jim Cornette**, Yokozuna, **Hakushi**, and **Shinja** (Hakushi's manager) had a three-hour meeting at New York's Kennedy Airport before Hakushi left for a tour of Japan, his homeland. Our spies tell us that Cornette plans to pair the two grapplers to go after WWF World tag team champions **The Smokin' Gunns**. Cornette is also planning to attack the Gunns with **Bruiser Bedlam** and **Mantaur**.

Bret Hart says he has proven his point and doesn't want any more matches against his brother Owen. "I've beaten him over and over again," Bret said. "There's nothing left to prove. He still thinks he can beat me, but it's not going to happen. He's got to face that fact already!" ... Veteran **Dominic DeNucci** is back in the ring again, appearing on some independent cards in Ohio ... **"Man O' War" Aldo Montoya** and **The Kid** are back on speaking terms again. Montoya had been angry that Kid chose **Bob "Spark Plugg" Holly** as his partner in the WWF tag team tournament. Montoya realized how unprofessional his actions were and apologized.

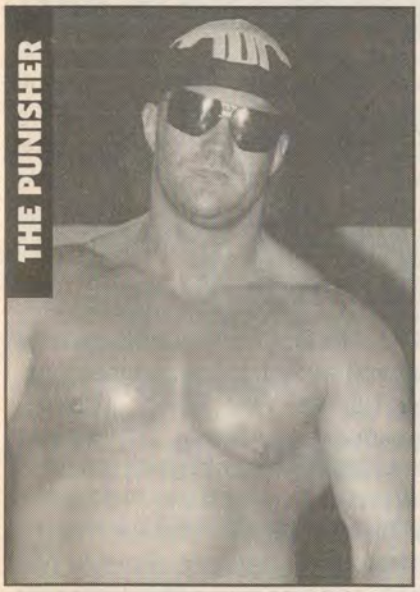
Pan-American Championship Wrestling heavyweight champion **T.J. Jackson** is feuding with former

champion **Larry "Thunderbolt" Hamilton** ... ECW heavyweight champion **Shane Douglas** has agreed to give **Tasmaniac** several shots at the belt on upcoming ACW cards in Maryland ... **Tommy Dreamer** and **Scotty "The Raven" Flamingo** are engaged in a bloody ECW feud.

The Punisher claims he can bodyslam **Haystacks Calhoun Jr.**, a man who weighs 526 pounds. "That's

KIN' NEWS

By Bill Apter

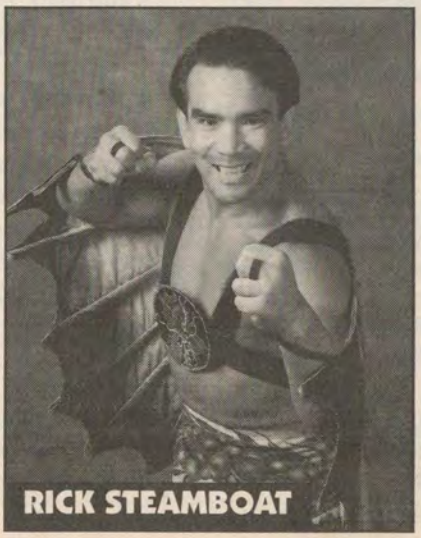

THE PUNISHER

hogwash," responded Calhoun. He told Punisher he'd pay him $10,000 if he could do it—on the condition that Punisher would give *him* $10,000 if he couldn't. So far, Punisher hasn't responded to that offer.

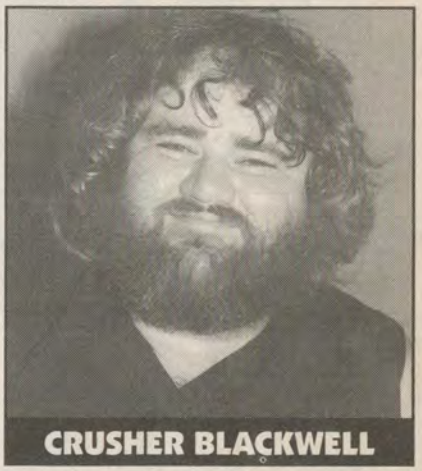
Harvey Wippleman isn't at all pleased with **Kwang's** win-loss record and has him back in training ... **Arn Anderson** is still talking about bringing **Tully Blanchard** into **Col. Robert Parker's Stud Stable** ... **Johnny Gunn** is considering moving to Puerto Rico to continue his war with **Eddie Gilbert** that heated up in November's NWA title tournament ... **Jesse Ventura** should be back in the WWF as a broadcaster by the time you read this ... The IWA's **Lumberjack** injured **Tito Santana's** left ankle in a recent bout.

The SRN radio network has joined forces with WCW; they have a new syndicated radio program that can be heard in many markets. The unique thing about the program is that it broadcasts pay-per-view events on radio! **John Ellis** handles the blow-by-blow, while the one and only **Gordon Solie** does color commentary ... The AIWF has had some real wild women's tag team action recently. **Candi Devine** and **Lisa Handzel** have been battling sisters **Rose** and **Regina Hale**.

Bill Dundee says he will take a more active role in the career of **PG-13**. His son, **Jamie**, also known as **J.C. Ice** and **Wolfie D**, have been unable to regain the USWA tag team belts from **Doug Gilbert** and **Tommy Rich**. "I do see some obvious miscalculations on their parts," Dundee reported. "With more input from me, they'll have the belts back within a few weeks!" ... **Dory Funk Jr.** is off to wrestle in Japan (again!) ... **Lou Thesz** was recently honored by St. Louis' baseball writers for all the charity work he does ... **Larry Sharpe's** "Monster Factory" wrestling training school in New Jersey was recently the topic of a feature on *The Bulletin*, a news and entertainment show that airs on KYW-TV in Philadelphia.


RICK STEAMBOAT

Rick Steamboat told me, "I'm enjoying my forced retirement. I get to spend time with my wife and son. I do miss my fans, though, and I hope they won't forget me!" You can find Steamboat working out regularly in his gym in Charlotte, North Carolina ... A tribute to **Jerry "Crusher" Blackwell**, who died in January, is featured in the Summer 1995 issue of *Wrestling Superstars*, which is on sale now.


CRUSHER BLACKWELL

ECW manager extraordinaire **Jason** has brought rookie **Paul Lauria** to ECW with the express purpose of destroying **Mikey Whipwreck**. And believe me, Lauria knows Whipwreck well. "Jason's taking a real low shot at me," said Mikey. "He found a guy who used to beat me up when I was just a kid. For my sake, I hope he can't do it now" ... **Rick Martel** has signed to wrestle in IWCCW ... **The Moondogs** made some kids in Louisville, Kentucky, really happy recently. They visited a hospital there and shook hands and played all sorts of games with the children.

That's all for now. I'll see you at the matches! □

ON THE ROAD

With Chris Bernucca

AS THE AMTRAK whistles along the rails connecting Philadelphia and New York, I am trying to figure out two things. The first is if the contents of the cup of coffee I am drinking were ever used for something else, like, say, brake fluid. The second is the reason behind Lawrence Taylor's desire to become a wrestler.

My first reaction to this news was that Taylor will get himself killed. I don't care if he was the greatest defensive player in football history. I don't care how he forever changed the outside linebacker position. I don't care how many career sacks he had. I don't care that he broke Joe Theismann's leg. In the wrestling ring, that stuff matters about as much as the color of your robe.

Lawrence Taylor stood in Lex Luger's corner for a WCW match against Mr. Hughes several years ago. That experience plus all his years in the NFL won't prepare him for a career as a wrestler, says Chris Bernucca.

Wrestling is very different from football. There are no helmets or shoulder pads. There are no teammates to help fill gaps and take blocks. There are no timeouts or situational substitutions. There are very few rules and even fewer penalties. There are no placekickers.

Does Taylor think he was held a bit too much during his football career? All of those times won't add up to the number of times he is grabbed in just one match in the ring, where holding is not only permitted, but encouraged. Does Taylor believe he was the victim of a cheap shot or two in his gridiron days? I'm sure he'll have a difficult time remembering those when he gets clobbered with a pair of brass knuckles. Does Taylor think he will receive favorable treatment from the officials, as he did in the NFL? Welcome to the WWF, Lawrence, where the referees are deaf *and* blind.

Taylor is not exactly wrestling Theismann in his debut, either. His first match—and perhaps his last—was scheduled to be against Bam Bam Bigelow. Bigelow is a 368-pound midcard wrestler with a mean streak. Taylor probably considers Bigelow nothing more than a left tackle who has never made the Pro Bowl.

Of course, that left tackle pancaked Taylor at the Royal Rumble in January. Bigelow had just lost a match and was dumped by manager Ted DiBiase. Taylor was a guest of WWF World champion Diesel and seated in the front row. After saying something to Bigelow, he was a guest of WWF World champion Diesel and seated in the third row. Lip-reading experts have reviewed the videotape countless times and determined that seconds before his abrupt seating change, Taylor told Bigelow, "Your mother wears combat boots."

Bigelow received a 30-day suspension without pay, which means dear old Mum will be wearing those combat boots for at least another month. Taylor received a match with Bigelow, which means his days on this Earth are numbered. He gives away more than 100 pounds in actual weight and about 100 tons in experience to Bigelow. If Bigelow is able to find it in his heart to spare Taylor at WrestleMania, which will be history by the time you're reading this, L.T. should not make the mistake of angering the big man by persisting in the charade.

Taylor has no professional wrestling experience, but he has experienced many of the same things that wrestlers have. And these experiences may be the only things that prevent Taylor from being pancaked

(Continued on page 59)

Behind the Dressing Room Door

by David Rosenbaum

"EVERYONE ELSE PUTS their best foot forward in pay-per-views, so why can't the damn referees? What's wrong with those people? We're out there working our butts off, and they can't help but become a part of the game. That had to be the worst performance by a bunch of referees I've ever seen.

"They were horrid!"

The words you have just read were spoken by a wrestler in the fan favorites' locker room at Baltimore Arena on February 19, 1995, just minutes after SuperBrawl V ended. A surly, unsatisfied crowd was still spilling out onto the streets of Baltimore, and Hulk Hogan was still in the ring, trying to milk every inch of forced affection out of the remaining fans.

The crowd was surly because the results of SuperBrawl V had to be the most unsatisfying of any PPV in a long time, and that was because Nick Patrick and Randy Anderson, supposedly two of the most respected referees in the sport, had to stick their noses where they didn't belong.

It was a bad day at the office for Nick and Randy. The referees missed everything.

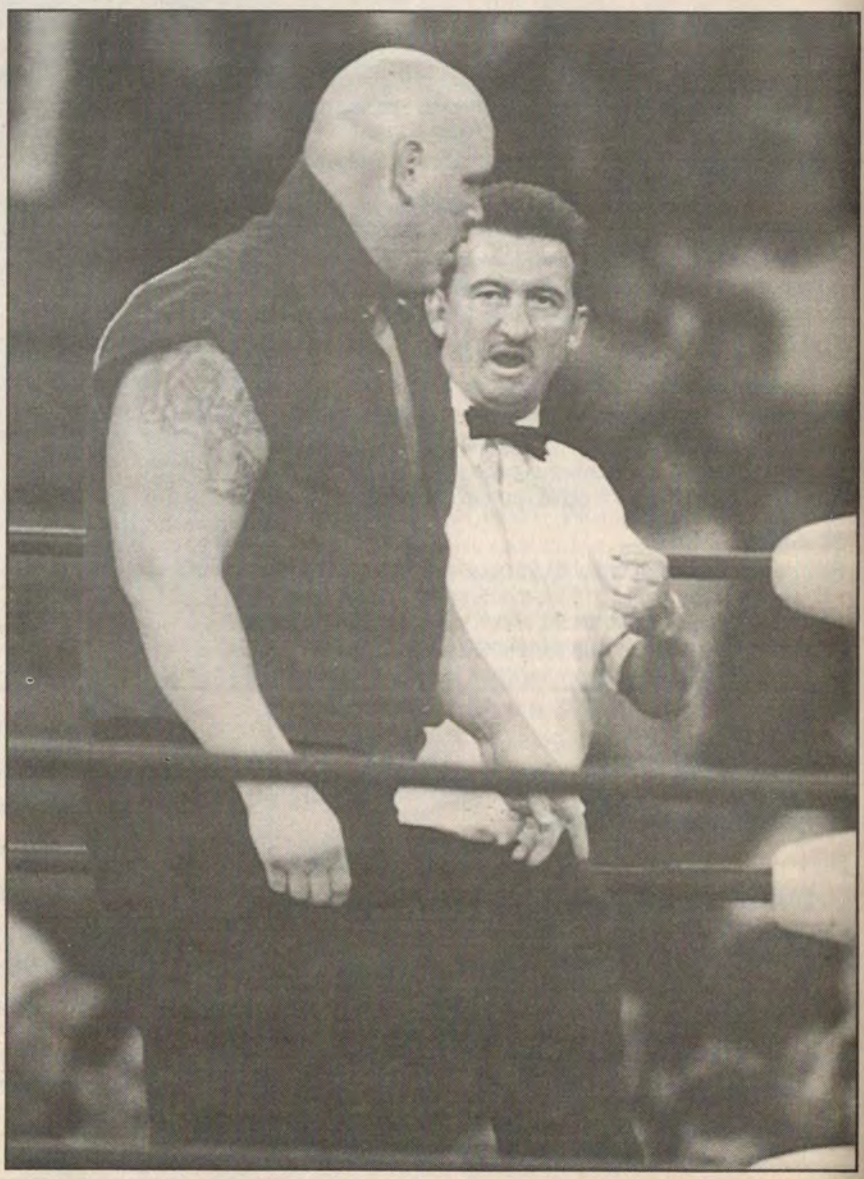
In a lumberjack match between TV champion Arn Anderson and Johnny B. Badd that was broadcast live on *WCW Main Event* before the pay-per-view, Patrick didn't see Blacktop Bully pushing Badd off the top rope, which led directly to the pin.

Kevin Sullivan vs. Dave Sullivan should have ended after Kevin whipped Dave into Brutus Beefcake's face.

Blacktop Bully defeated Dustin Rhodes, but only after Col. Robert Parker held Dustin's legs during a suplex. The pin never should have counted. Sting and Randy Savage defeated Avalanche and Bubba Rogers after an illegal double-teaming maneuver.

But the worst call of all, perhaps one of the worst calls in wrestling history, occurred in the match for the WCW World tag team title. The Nasty Boys should have walked out of Baltimore Arena with Harlem Heat's belts, but they didn't because Anderson

(Continued on page 58)



WCW referee Randy Anderson issues a warning to Blacktop Bully. Too bad Anderson, not Nick Patrick, wasn't officiating the Johnny B. Badd-Arn Anderson match. Maybe *he* would have noticed Bully's interference.

the Insider

by Eddie Ellner

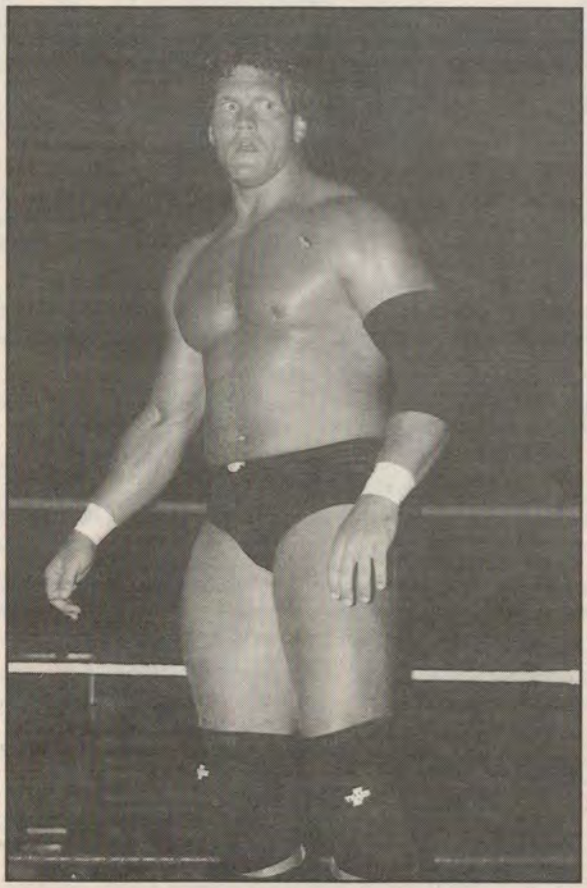
(The opinions expressed in "The Insider" are those of Eddie Ellner alone, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of anyone else on the staff of this magazine.)

Editor's note: INSIDE WRESTLING columnists Eddie Ellner and Liz Hunter have been given the assignment of traveling cross-country by car and recording their observations of the sport and the people who follow it. For the first leg of their trip, they have a passenger by the name of Jim Cornette, whose mother is interested in purchashing the Pittsburgh Steelers.

ONE OF THE conditions of this little traveling adventure is that Liz Hunter and I can't read each other's columns before we send them in. A good provision, because if she had read my first drafts—the ones I write to release the poisonous venom I feel toward her—then she would have instantly suffered a nervous breakdown.

Take for instance our first hour together in the car. Jim Cornette is stuffed in the back seat, ears and eyes glued to his little TV, humming Pittsburgh Steelers fight songs like a steel worker on Prozac.

His decision to manage The Rock n' Roll Express in their matches against The Gangstas proved Cornette was deranged, but to what extent was unclear until this trip. Every two minutes he'd ask me lunatic questions—"Don't you think [Pittsburgh star running back Barry] Foster could beat the crap out of Hulk Hogan?" ... "Do you think we could have matches during halftime?" ... and so on. He still had this notion he was going to buy the Steelers.



I don't know what to make of Sid Vicious these days. He had a decent seven-month reign as USWA. He also looked good beating up Brian Christopher, but who doesn't look good beating up Brian Christopher?

In the front seat, Hunter smiled.

"What so damned funny?" I demanded to know.

"Maybe you should go work for Cornette," she laughed. "You could be the marketing director for the Steelers."

"The day I do that is the day you stop going to the bathroom every five minutes," I said.

Don't get me wrong: It's not that I mind stopping when someone has to go, but if Liz stopped pounding down wine coolers, maybe she could hold her water.

Pittsburgh provided sweet relief, like a favorite sweater still warm from the dryer. A working-class town surrounded by calm river water, refitted with modern glass skyscrapers. Hunter instigated a ridiculous problem at check-in: She felt it compromised her integrity to accept Cornette's offer of a penthouse suite. This from the same woman who never met a free dinner she didn't eat.

"That's different," she said.

While she checked into a Holiday Inn, I checked out my penthouse. With a bag of macadamia nuts and cold Evian water, I reclined on my king-size bed and started watching wrestling tapes. Seems Cornette brings a trunkful of them on every road trip.

After fast-forwarding my way through tapes of a small card in Windsor, Ontario, and a WWF taping in Palmetto, Florida, I settled on a USWA card out of the Mid-

(Continued on page 60)

ON Assignment

By Liz Hunter

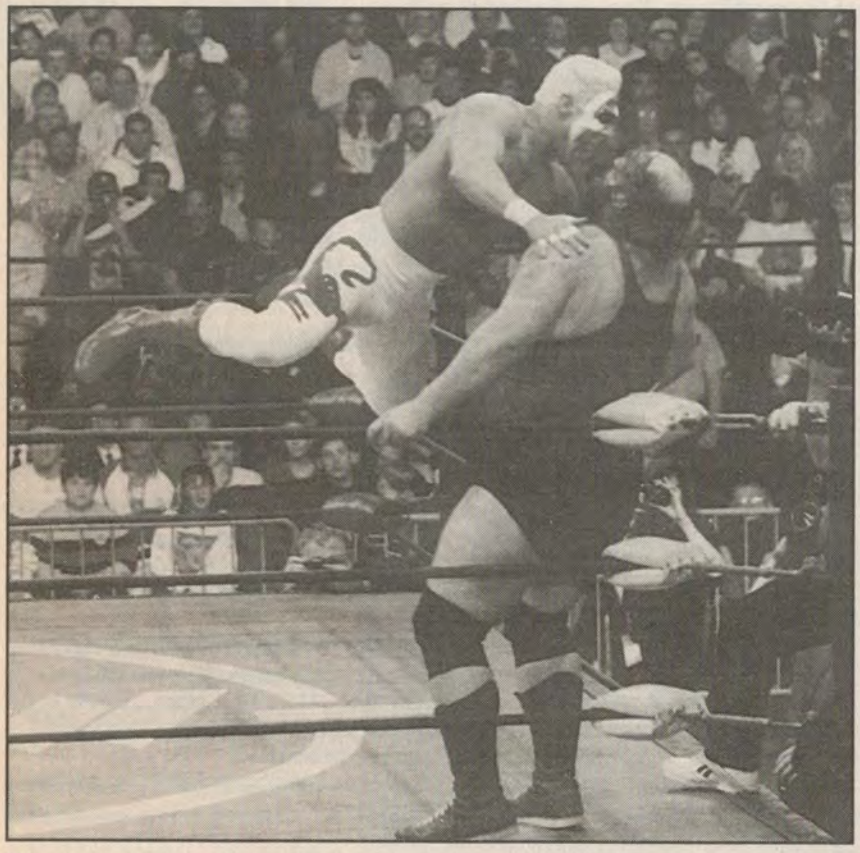
THE GRAND Experiment—Eddie Ellner and I driving across the country together—almost ended before it began ... over a trip to the restroom.

"I have to go the bathroom," I said as we headed over the George Washington Bridge into New Jersey.

"You just went 15 minutes ago," Ellner barked. "Can't it wait?"

I looked toward the back of the car for help. Jim Cornette was tagging along until Pittsburgh, where he said he was meeting with the Pittsburgh Steelers owners (I had my doubts) about possibly purchasing the team. Since Cornette is a mama's boy, I figured he would understand and sympathize with my plight. But he was hypnotized by a Steelers video he had playing over and over on his portable VCR monitor.

"Jim, Jim!" I said. "Can you help me out?"



Sting looked fantastic against Avalanche in a match in Pittsburgh, reports Liz Hunter. He was even better in the locker room afterward, when he made Eddie Ellner look like a fool.

"Quiet! Franco Harris is about to make the 'Immaculate Reception,'" he snapped without looking up.

Ellner eventually did stop for me—but only after I negotiated over to him my music-choice rights clear to Indiana. I was so agitated when I got in the car that I lit a cigarette; Ellner threatened to dump me in the middle of the highway if I didn't put it out.

I hate him. I hate everything about him. I wish he would die.

In Pittsburgh, Cornette offered to put us up in adjoining penthouse suites, but journalistic integrity forced me to decline.

"Are you crazy?" he asked. "I expect you'll still kill me in print. What's the difference if you get a good night's sleep in the bargain?"

Ellner agreed with him and stayed. I left for a Holiday Inn down the block.

That night I went—alone, gratefully—to Civic Arena for a WCW card, where I watched Sting defeat a very determined Avalanche. Sting looked phenomenal—trim, strong and moving faster than ever. In the press room afterward, Ellner (where did he come from?) asked Sting how it felt to be wrestling preliminary matches.

"Are you calling Avalanche a preliminary wrestler?" Sting replied.

"He's no Big Van Vader," Ellner said.

"And you're no Liz Hunter!" Sting declared, provoking a roomful of laughs. I could have kissed him, but journalistic integrity would not permit that, either.

The next day, following Cornette's day-long meetings with Pittsburgh Steelers brass, Ellner and I had dinner with him. It turned out (or so James E. said) that after the Steelers' devastating loss to the San Diego Chargers in the AFC championship game, owner Art Rooney Jr., his dreams of going out a winner crushed, no longer wanted to sell the team.

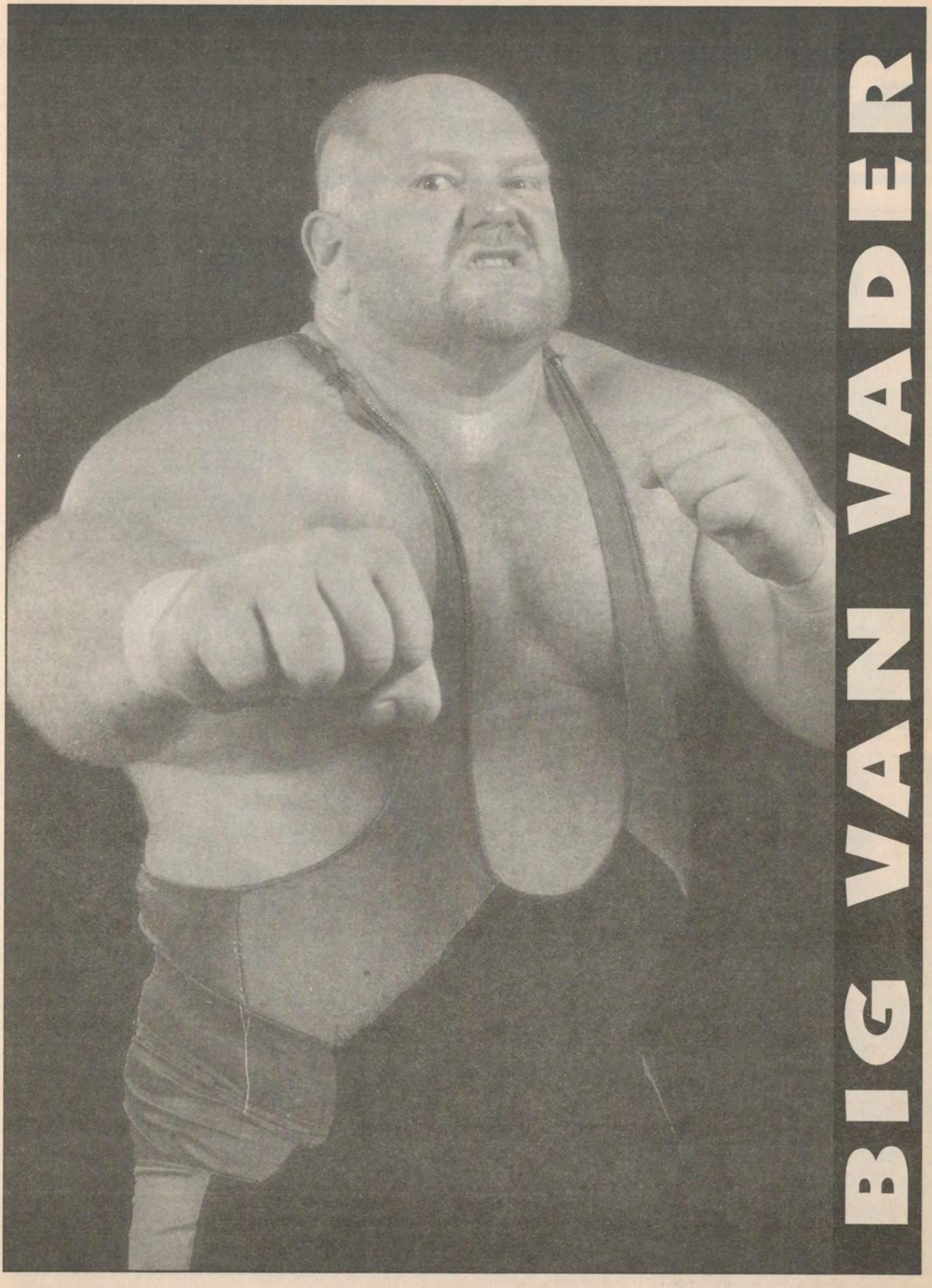
(Continued on page 62)

INSIDE WRESTLING CAPSULE PROFILE 228

BIG VAN VADER

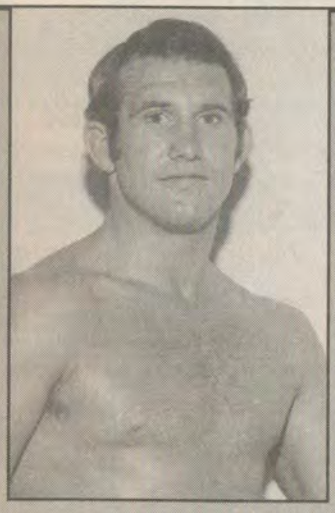
BIG VAN VADER is undeniably one of the most awesome forces in the sport today. At 6'5" and 450 pounds, the three-time former WCW World champ (and current U.S. champ) possesses crippling strength, startling agility, and a nasty attitude *("I am the complete athlete")* ... The Lynwood, California, native was an outstanding wrestler and football player in high school and had an exemplary collegiate football career at the University of Colorado ... Played offensive guard and center with the Los Angeles Rams from 1977-81 ... Was a sparring partner for former WBA heavyweight boxing champion Mike Weaver *("I could've been the champ myself if I'd wanted to!")* ... Began training for his wrestling career with Brad Rheingans in 1985 *("He is the best trainer in the sport")* ... Debuted in the AWA, where he became known as Baby Bull ... Clashed with legendary wildman Bruiser Brody, who once broke his leg with a chair *("Facing Brody taught me how to survive in the ring")* ... Toured Europe with the Catch Wrestling Association in 1986, becoming the first American to win the CWA title ... Defeated Shinya Hashimoto in an April 1989 tournament in Tokyo to win the vacant IWGP title; he went on to win the belt two more times *("That began my domination of Japan and the world")* ... Began wearing a mask to partially cover his face, intensifying his grotesque appearance ... Held major titles on three continents simultaneously: the IWGP in Japan, UWA in Mexico, and CWA in Germany *("That's a **true** world champion!")* ... Feuded with veteran brawler Stan Hansen in Japan and battled him to a double-disqualification at WCW's Wrestle War '91... Won the IWGP tag team championship in Japan with Bam Bam Bigelow in 1992 ... Eventually signed with manager Harley Race and began feuding with then-WCW World champion Sting ... Beat Sting for the belt in July 1992 *("Just one of my many victories over that punk!")* ... His reign only lasted three weeks, as Ron Simmons dethroned him in Baltimore on August 2 ... Regained the title from Simmons on December 30, 1992 *("The belt was back where it belonged!")* ... Started a savage feud with Cactus Jack, the low point of which came when he power-bombed Jack on the arena floor in Atlanta. Jack suffered a severe concussion and bouts of amnesia that sidelined him for several months *("I chose to spare his life!")* ... Lost the World title to Sting in March 1993, but regained it six days later ... Lost the belt for the third time to Ric Flair at Starrcade '93 ... Spent much of 1994 feuding with The Guardian Angel, then won the U.S. title from Hacksaw Duggan at Starrcade '94 ... Broke down World champ Hulk Hogan's locker room door at that pay-per-view and challenged him to a World title match ("As U.S. champ, I am the number one contender!")... Has been feuding with him since *("I **will** destroy 'Hulkamania' forever!")*. □

Big Van Vader crushed Hacksaw Duggan at Starrcade to win the U.S. title, but he isn't satisfied. The three-time former WCW World champ has his sights set on World champ Hulk Hogan.


BIG VAN VADER

Where Are They NOW?

Do you have a favorite wrestler who has left your area? Are you wondering where he is today? Then this special column is just for you. Each month we will update the whereabouts of four current or former wrestlers



STEVEN WRIGHT

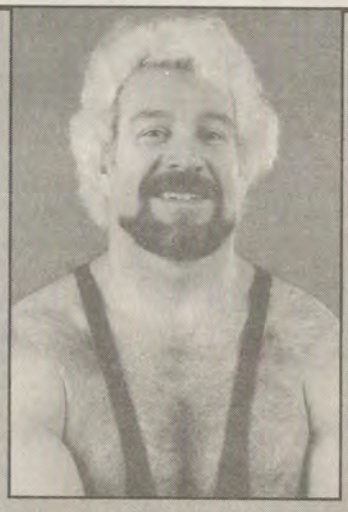
The father of WCW's teen sensation "Das Wunderkind" Alex Wright, Steven had a good pro career himself until he retired a few years ago because of injuries. He is now a physical therapist in Germany. Though he admits he was never the aerialist that his son already is, Steven says he was instrumental in Alex's training. "He has natural ability," Steven says, "but he has to keep working very hard. I keep an eye on him. He knows he can learn from my experiences."

BOB ROOP

The man who made the shoulderbreaker famous, Roop reports that he is enjoying his retirement in Florida. A former amateur standout, Roop won many titles during his pro career and also helped Lex Luger prepare for his debut. Roop reported that he is devoting a lot of time to writing a book about wrestling that he hopes to get published in a few years. "I have many stories to tell," he says. "The fans would love to read what I have to say."

MIL MASCARAS

Mascaras, widely regarded as the finest aerial wrestler of all-time, is still competing in Mexico and Japan at the age of 56. "The Man Of 1,000 Masks" also still makes action movies in Mexico when his schedule permits. "I see all these young high-flyers like The Kid and Sabu, and I know they have learned from watching me," he notes. "People are amazed that I'm still going strong. I love wrestling so much!"

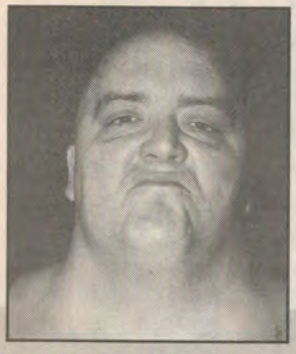


KEN PATERA

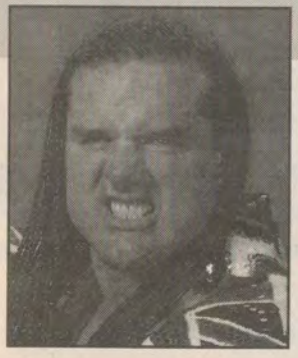
A former WWF Intercontinental champion and AWA star, Patera still wrestles from time to time in Minnesota, where he lives. That in itself is quite a feat, considering he has a very painful hip injury that might require major surgery. Patera, who held the AWA tag team title with the late Crusher Blackwell, also runs a gym near Minneapolis. "I'm not ready to hang 'em up yet," he says.

NEWS FROM THE

NIAGARA FALLS, NY
BY EDDIE NORRIS



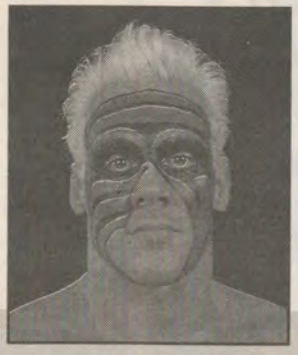
KING KONG BUNDY VS. DAVEY BOY SMITH



This bout was an important one because both men are fighting to get their chances at the WWF World title. Bundy had two Druids in his corner, and the "British Bulldog" initially seemed reluctant to lock up. After he finally did, he had Bundy reeling with a series of shoulderblocks. After several failed attempts, Smith even bodyslammed the 446-pounder! But just as Smith was picking up momentum, one of the Druids distracted the referee. While this was happening, the other Druid (later revealed to be Irwin R. Schyster) attacked Smith and left him lying in the ring. Bundy rolled on top of him for the pin.

OTHER BOUTS: Henry Godwinn pinned Bob Holly … WWF World tag team champions The Smokin' Gunns beat Well Dunn … Shawn Michaels beat Aldo Montoya … Mabel pinned Irwin R. Schyster … Bret Hart beat Owen Hart … Razor Ramon defeated Intercontinental champion Jeff Jarrett by disqualification.

WINSTON-SALEM, NC
BY CURT WELLS

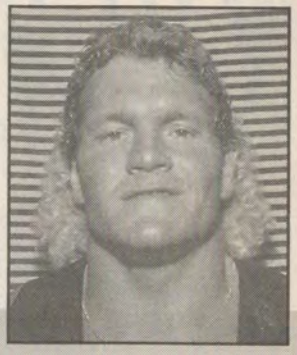


STING VS. AVALANCHE

As he had in most of their previous encounters, Sting tried to wear the 503-pounder down by using his quickness. Avalanche had a hard time getting his hands on the "Stinger" early in the match. With the big man clearly tiring out, Sting tried to knock him down with a series of shoulderblocks. Avalanche wobbled, but refused to go down. He hit Sting with a number of powerful forearms to the back. Finally, when Sting came bouncing off the ropes, Avalanche caught him and threw him over the top rope; he was disqualified.

OTHER BOUTS: Alex Wright pinned Bobby Eaton … Marcus Alexander Bagwell & The Patriot beat Paul Orndorff & Paul Roma … Johnny B. Badd pinned WCW TV champion Arn Anderson in a non-title match … The Nasty Boys defeated WCW World tag team champions Harlem Heat by disqualification when Sherri Martel interfered … U.S. champion Big Van Vader pinned Hacksaw Duggan.

MEMPHIS, TN
BY PHIL SEAWRIGHT



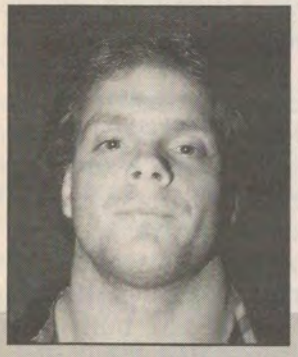
SID VICIOUS VS. JERRY LAWLER

USWA heavyweight champion Vicious knew he was in for a tough test when he agreed to this no-DQ match. He got the best of Lawler with some clotheslines early. "The King" retaliated with a bodyslam. After surviving a chokehold and a piledriver, Lawler fought back and piledrived Vicious. Sid choke-slammed Lawler and hit him with a legdrop. As Lawler rallied, Sid called Spellbinder into the ring. As he went to punch Lawler, "The King" ducked, and Sid took the blow. Seconds later, Lawler rolled on top of him and pinned him to win the belt.

OTHER BOUTS: The Moondogs defeated Sgt. Victor & Reggie B. Fine … Spellbinder beat Tony Williams … Crusher Bones & Big Daddy Cyrus beat Doug Basham & King Cobra … Miss Texas beat Sweet Georgia Brown … Scott Studd beat Gorgeous George III … USWA tag team champions Doug Gilbert & Tommy Rich beat PG-13 … Southern champion Brian Christopher beat Big Daddy Cyrus.

WRESTLING CAPITALS

PHILADELPHIA, PA
BY DAVE WEISS

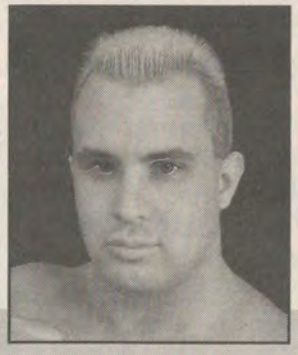


CHRIS BENOIT VS. AL SNOW

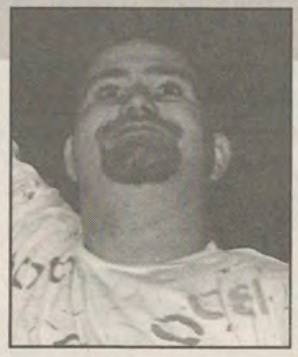
Snow, a newcomer to ECW, got a tough test when he took on the man who bills himself "The Crippler." Snow took the early advantage with a series of savate kicks and superkicks. He also hit Benoit with a vicious clothesline. As the match progressed, it became a battle of suplexes between two great technical wrestlers. Benoit nearly got the win after a belly-to-back suplex. Snow responded with his own version, then added a side suplex. When Snow clamped on a full-nelson, Benoit quickly reversed it, executed another belly-to-back suplex, and got the pinfall.

OTHER BOUTS: The Pit Bulls & Jason the Terrible beat The Young Dragons & Hack Myers ... Tommy Dreamer pinned Steve Richards ... Mikey Whipwreck beat Paul Lauria ... Ian Rotten pinned Axl Rotten ... ECW heavyweight champ Shane Douglas pinned Tully Blanchard ... Sabu & Tasmaniac beat ECW tag team champions Public Enemy to win the belts.

KNOXVILLE, TN
BY ANGIE WARFIELD



CHRIS CANDIDO VS. BOO BRADLEY



Former tag team partners went at it in an intense match. There was prematch drama, too, as Tammy Fytch and NWA promoter Dennis Coraluzzo accompanied Candido to the ring. They tried to get referee Mark Curtis to cancel the match because of Bradley's "mental instability." Curtis refused and ordered the bout started, and Candido showed off his skills by executing a top-rope "Frankensteiner." Bradley then grabbed a nightstick from a policeman, but returned it when he was told he couldn't use it. Fytch later returned dressed as a bag lady, but after she dropped her loaded purse, Bradley smashed Candido with it and got the pin.

OTHER BOUTS: Buddy Landell beat Tracey Smothers ... Rick Morton beat Unibomb ... The Heavenly Bodies wrestled The Gangstas to a no-contest ... Rick Morton won a battle royal ... Jerry Lawler beat SMW heavyweight champ Tony Anthony to win the title ... Tony Anthony beat Buddy Landell.

HERSHEY, PA
BY TONY WILSON

BRET HART VS. OWEN HART

The feud that never seems to end continued at the Civic Center. And this Hart vs. Hart war was a no-holds-barred bout. Bret arrived in the ring first and announced that his brother was too scared to come out. Hearing that, Owen ran down the aisle, and the two brawled at ringside. The brawl continued inside the ring, where "The Hitman" almost got the pin after executing a DDT and a legdrop. After Owen used a fire extinguisher and the house microphone to batter Bret, Bret recovered and locked on the "sharpshooter"; Owen quickly submitted. It took several referees and WWF officials to pry Bret off.

OTHER BOUTS: Aldo Montoya defeated Kwang ... Mabel defeated Irwin R. Schyster ... WWF World tag team champions The Smokin' Gunns beat Well Dunn ... King Kong Bundy defeated Davey Boy Smith ... Razor Ramon defeated Intercontinental champ Jeff Jarrett by disqualification.

Matt Brock's Plain Speaking

Harder than nails, veteran wrestling reporter Matt Brock has logged more miles covering wrestling than any other journalist. Every month Matt will travel to the sport's hotbeds, reporting everything he sees without fear or favor

PHILADELPHIA, PA

Whatever happened to good ol' fashioned covering your opponent, one-two-three, for the pin? I'll tell you what happened: It existed in pro wrestling for about a minute before some wise promoter realized there are far more interesting stipulations that can be attached to a match. Thing is, it took a long time for somebody to realize that one of those stipulations is to make wrestlers smash each other through tables. Those were the conditions here when Sabu and Tasmaniac defeated Public Enemy for the ECW tag team belts. A wrestler wasn't eliminated until he was smashed through a table. Pins and submissions meant nothing; tables meant everything. Bruiser Brody would have loved this. Then again, the Bruiser loved using his bare hands. Tables? These ECW people seem to have a thing for props. At least they know what the fans want. This is the blue-collar crowd to end all blue-collar crowds, which is fine with me, and they see nothing wrong with kicking off a lazy weekend by watching four men bash each other to bloody bits. You know, there was a time when your reporter knew what wrestling was all about. Now I'm starting to wonder. Sheila Warner of Brooklyn, New York, is wondering, too, but I think she was wondering about something entirely different than the match, like what I was going to give her for Valentine's Day. Well, rocks just aren't my style and roses at $75 a dozen don't sound too appealing, either, so that meant there was some shopping to do. Thing is, you'll never catch me dead in a lingerie department.

JERRY LAWLER

LOUISVILLE, KY

Word travels fast. "Whatcha doing here, Matt?" Jerry Lawler asked me. "I thought you got hitched." Word travels fast, but that doesn't mean it gets there in the same condition it started. Lawler's wrong. Lawler's also the Smoky Mountain heavyweight champion, which is something I thought I'd never see, so it looks like "The King" has branched out again. "No big deal," Lawler said. "This is the land of opportunity, and I go wherever there's an opportunity." It worked for Lawler when he used a sizable

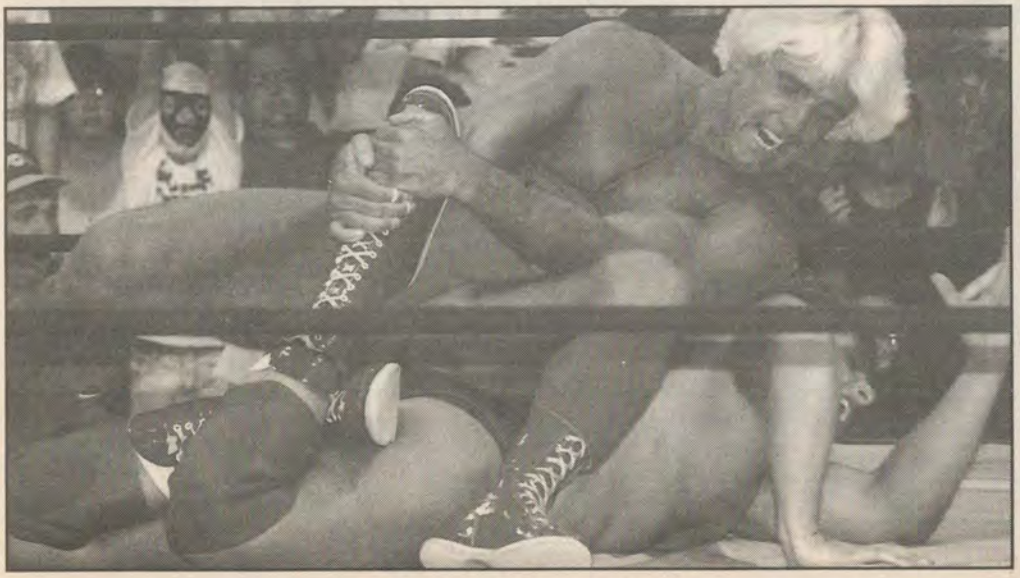
amount of interference from Buddy Landell to beat "Dirty White Boy" Tony Anthony for the SMW belt. These days, Lawler's liked in only one place, Memphis, and even here in Louisville, the fans don't seem too pleased with his presence. And this is a USWA crowd. Meanwhile, Lawler can't shake the subject. "Where's the lady?" he asks. "Back in New York," I tell him. "On Valentine's Day?" Lawler asks. "Matt, you have to learn a little something about love." "Yeah," I admit, revealing a bit more than I planned to, at least for now.

BALTIMORE, MD

The great Lou Thesz, one of the finest gentlemen this sport has ever seen, once said to me, "Matt, once a wrestler, always a wrestler. It gets in your blood, and it's worse than any addiction. You can't even go cold turkey." Thesz had been sitting there quietly in this Japanese bar while me and a couple of colleagues were arguing about the allure of hand-to-hand combat and why so many wrestlers try to retire, then come back, retire again, and come back again. Thesz, after listening to our half-drunk babble for about an hour, finally had enough of the bull and gave us the real answer. Thought about it for a few minutes and realized he was right. It's addicting to the writers, too. Otherwise, an old hack like me wouldn't have been sitting in a Japanese bar with a bunch of old hacks one day before Christmas. Hulk Hogan keeps proving the addictive nature of the sport. He retires, makes a movie, retires, makes a movie, retires, makes a movie, and in between finds time to win another world title or two to feed his ego. The thing is, I'm not so sure any more that he's fueling his ego. He might just be fulfilling a need to wrestle. That's why there might have been a few people at SuperBrawl V who didn't think Ric Flair was there to get involved, but Hulk Hogan wasn't one of them. No way. He knew from firsthand experience that Flair was there because he tried, but failed, to get wrestling out of his blood, and now he was going to get his fix. The difference here is that Flair retired after losing a "loser-must-retire" match to Hogan, so his retirement has some legal entanglements, but you're not going to see Hogan hiring lawyers to bar Flair from the ring and, if they care anything about their pocketbooks, WCW promoters won't keep him away. Simple reason for that: If WCW rejects Flair, the WWF will take him. Flair will get his fix. Saw him afterward, just moments after the Hogan-Vader brawl, and Flair was smiling like the cat who just ate the canary. "Welcome back, Mr. Flair," I said. "You know it," he answered. That's right, I do.

NEW YORK, NY

There's this bar near the Garden where you can always find a few people who want to talk wrestling and aren't impressed if you're a reporter who's been in every locker room in every arena in the world. My kind of people. They're trying to figure out this little puzzle, like why WCW can suddenly have the best talent in this part of the world, yet its pay-per-view events are still inferior to the WWF's. Put it this way: Rank the top PPVs of the past year and you have WrestleMania X at number one, the Royal Rumble second, and who cares about the rest. WCW might be putting up the numbers, but you can tell the fans are getting frustrated. Wondering whether the WWF really is true blue after all. I never saw it that way, but then again, I never understood the appeal of a federation with Hogan, Beefcake, Duggan, and Big Bossman, or whatever he's calling himself now. I'll say this, though: It took almost an entire year in WCW for Hogan to prove to everyone that he's actually a pretty decent wrestler. □



RIC FLAIR VS. LORD STEVEN REGAL

"I lose interest in an opponent after I beat him, and I feel that having to beat him all over again is a waste of time," says handsome Nickie, who was once the darling of Hawaiian mat fans but who got so sick of pinning the same shoulders and looking at the same fans that he traded the security of the fabled islands for the new challenges of Dixie. Here's an up-to-the-minute report about...

NICK BOCKWINKEL

THE WRESTLER WHO HATES RETURN BOUTS

THE WAVES WERE smaller than usual as Nick Bockwinkel's surfboard bobbed along on the perfect waves off Hawaii's Waikiki beach. With a picnic lunch and a beautiful girl waiting for him on the beach, Nick seemed to be a man completely content, but his brain busily tried to untangle the thoughts that were crowding in like gathering thunderheads.

When he first came to Hawaii several years before, his good looks had made him an instant hero, and winning matches came naturally. In fact, maybe success had come too easy, and as the waves rocked him gently, Nick's mind was transported to places where new challenges could be waiting.

Maybe it was his imagination, he thought, but the crowds in Hawaii didn't seem as friendly anymore. But maybe it was his own fault. Nick had met nearly every wrestler who ever ventured over to the Islands. He had gotten to know their styles, their tricks and their little habits, and they knew his so well that they sometimes seemed to be going through automatic motions in the ring.

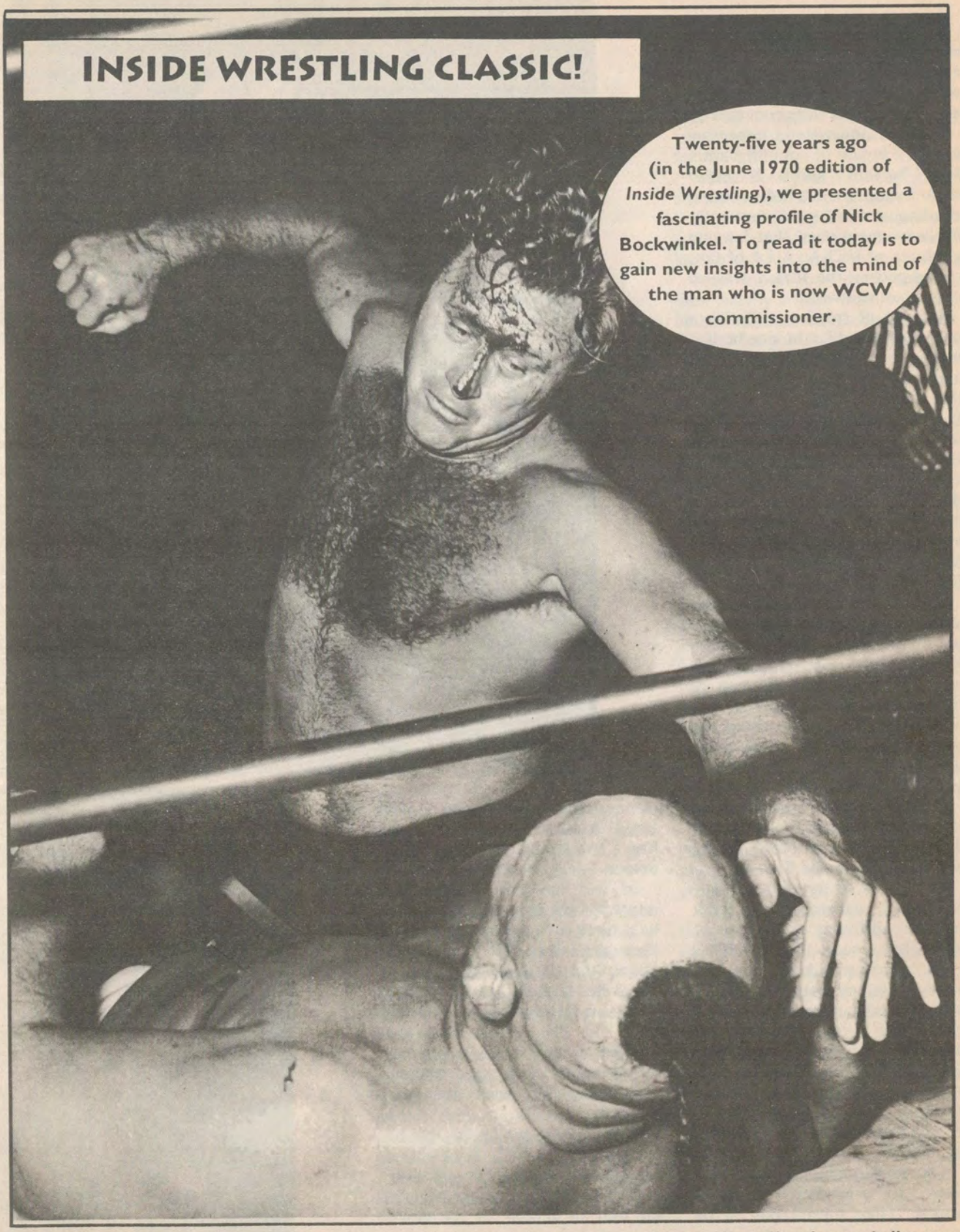
"After I beat a man once," Nick explains, "I lose some of my edge when I wrestle him again. I find it difficult to get *psyched* up for another match. I must have beaten everybody who came to Hawaii at least once, sometimes two or three times, and I simply didn't have any further interest in wrestling them again."

Hardly a week went by when a promoter in some part of the country didn't write Nick a letter, trying to lure him away from Hawaii. But he had never given the offers much serious thought until he received one from the South, which appealed to Nick because he'd never wrestled in Dixie before.

"I knew there'd be new faces in the ring and in the audience," he said, "and I liked the idea. It's almost as important for a wrestler to win over fans as it is for him to win matches. The fans don't have to love a wrestler, of course, but they must *want* to pay to see him."

Within a week, Nick was on his

INSIDE WRESTLING CLASSIC!


Twenty-five years ago (in the June 1970 edition of *Inside Wrestling*), we presented a fascinating profile of Nick Bockwinkel. To read it today is to gain new insights into the mind of the man who is now WCW commissioner.

"When I finally left Hawaii for Georgia, opponents like El Mongol, whom I am about to slug, offered new challenges. But how long I will keep wrestling in the South depends on how many interesting opponents they can come up with."

way to Atlanta, Georgia, to begin a new career, but things haven't worked out as well as he thought, as far as the fans were concerned.

"I went down there expecting to find a bunch of country bumpkins," he said, "and so I treated them wrong. I was a little condescending, and in the program notes it always mentioned that I was a graduate of UCLA. A lot of fans began getting the idea I was an egotistical showoff."

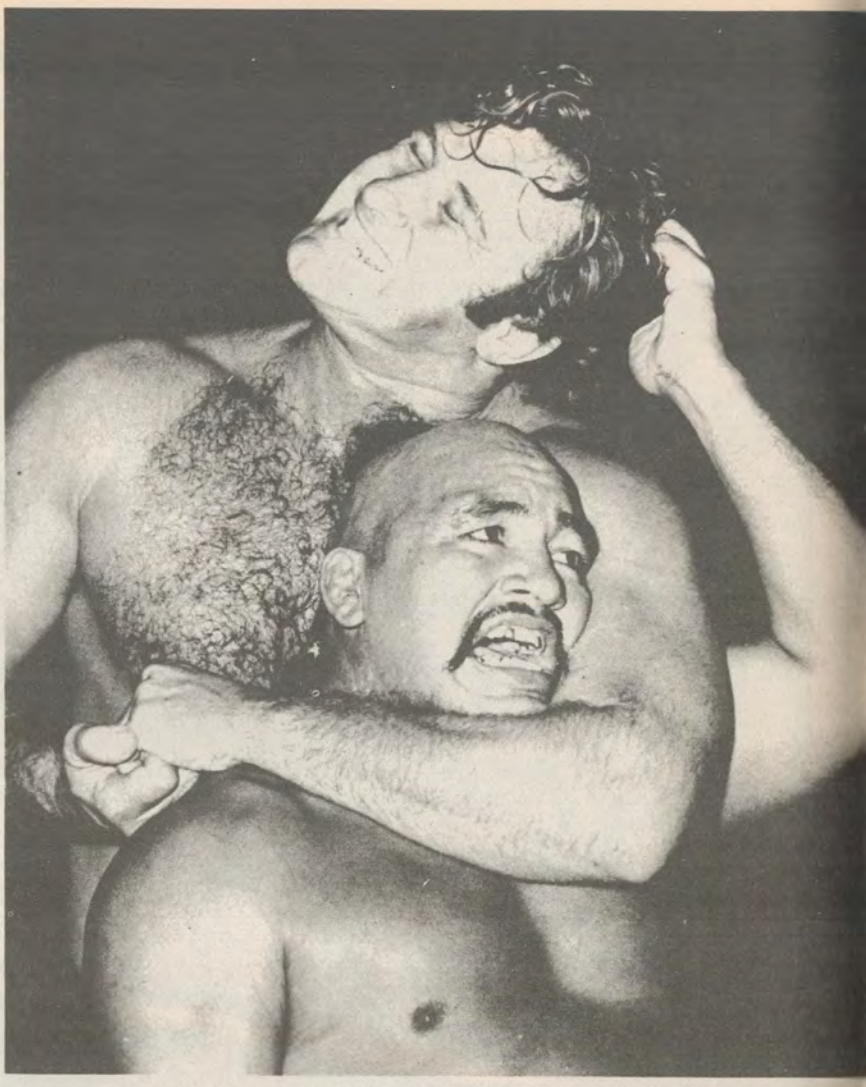
Instead of starting out with a popular image like the one he had in Hawaii, the fans booed Nick, and one night a sign was unfurled that said, "Yankee, Go Home!" It didn't make any difference to the fan who made that sign that Hawaii hadn't been part of the Civil War. The fan only knew that Nick Bockwinkel was an intruder who had made fun of local customs—from their y'all drawls to their grits for breakfast.

"It didn't take me long to find out I'd been wrong about the people in the South, and I tried to let them know I was sorry," Bockwinkel says. "Atlanta is one of the most modern cities in the world, and the people there are very much aware of what's going on. No slick operator is going to baffle them with fancy talk."

Nick had driven speedboats in Hawaii, and he discovered that drag racing and stockcar racing were popular in the South.

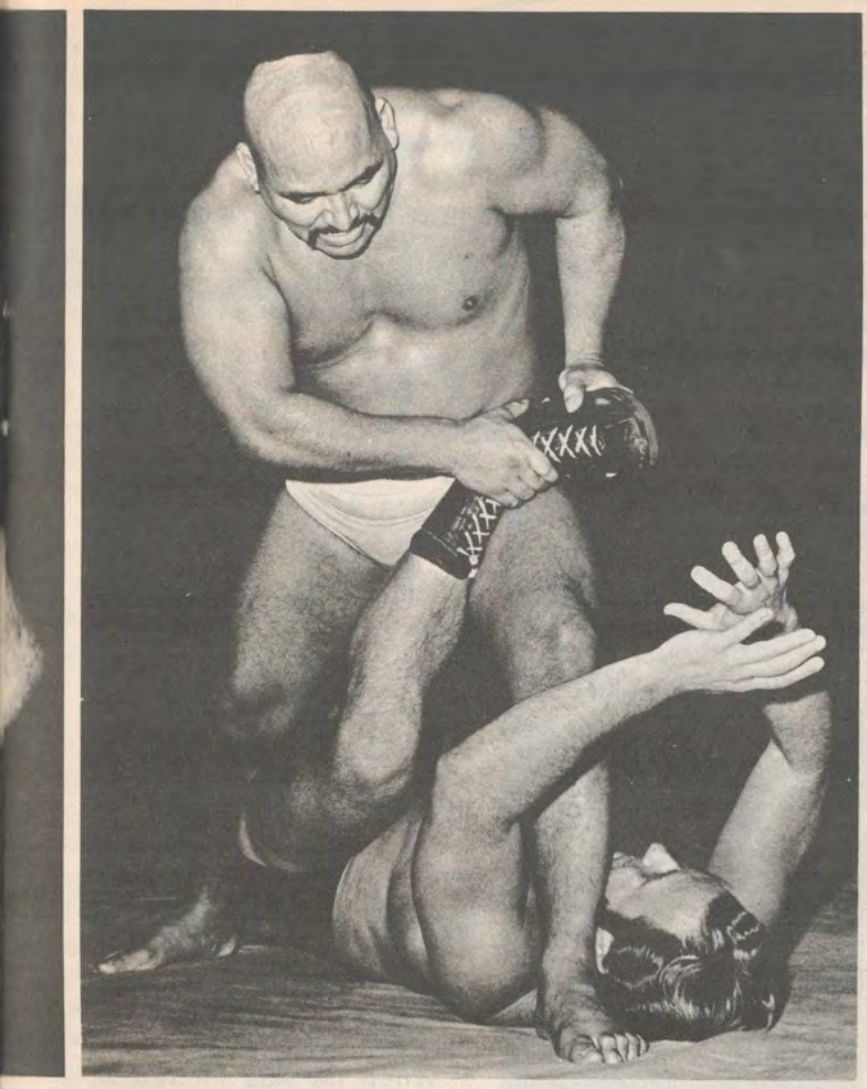
"I decided to try auto racing," he said. "I figured it might not be too different from racing boats, but I soon discovered it's a whole new world. I'm not very good at racing cars yet, but I have gotten a chance to meet a lot of fine people and some of them even come to see me wrestle. I think I'm gradually winning the wrestling fans over, but it would have been a lot easier if I hadn't alienated them from the beginning."

The wrestlers in the South also proved to be a surprise to Bockwinkel. They turned out to be just as polished as the men he had faced in Hawaii, and they even had a few tricks he'd never seen before.



In two matches, Bockwinkel improved his image more than if he'd hired a team of public relations specialists. The fans began taking him seriously for the first time when he defeated Joe Scarpa and then followed with a victory over The Pro. Scarpa and The Pro are two of the most popular wrestlers in Dixie, and anyone who beats them earns the fans' respect.

"I thought I was ready to be accepted, finally," Bockwinkel said, "and then I ran into El Mongol. I had made a mistake by calling him an animal for the news-



"The three pictures on these pages show some of the action during my recent bout with El Mongol in Atlanta, Ga. Although I found Mongol a rather exciting challenge, I was equally impressed by the warm reception I received from the fans of Atlanta. They made me feel right at home from the moment I stepped into the ring."

papers, and he really was out for vengeance. Don't get me wrong, I still think he's an animal, but I would never say so in the newspapers again."

El Mongol has become a legend in the South, but Nick wasn't impressed. Bockwinkel believed he was too scientific for the powerful Mongol, but it was Nick who wound up being taught a lesson.

"I can wrestle dirty if I have to," El Mongol said, "but I didn't want to use a single illegal hold on that pretty little boy. I wanted to snap his back and arms using nothing but honest, legal holds."

For five minutes, the Mongolian stayed close to his plan, dropping Bockwinkel with knee lifts and airplane spins and a half dozen other holds. El Mongol didn't even use the judo attack that has brought him so much fame until Bockwinkel was ready for the kill.

When Bockwinkel finally solved the riddle of El Mongol's attack, the Mongolian unloaded with a few double Judo chops and karate kicks to take charge again.

Any blood on Bockwinkel's face usually comes from wounds he has inflicted on his opponents, but El Mongol deserted his scientific plan completely to take a bute or two out of Nick's forehead.

"I've always believed I was too cool to go berserk in a match," Bockwinkel said, "but the sight of my own blood pouring down my face made something snap. We stood there lashing out at each other like a pair of wild animals trapped together in a pit. I should never have let that happen because I'm still convinced I can beat El Mongol anytime in a scientific match."

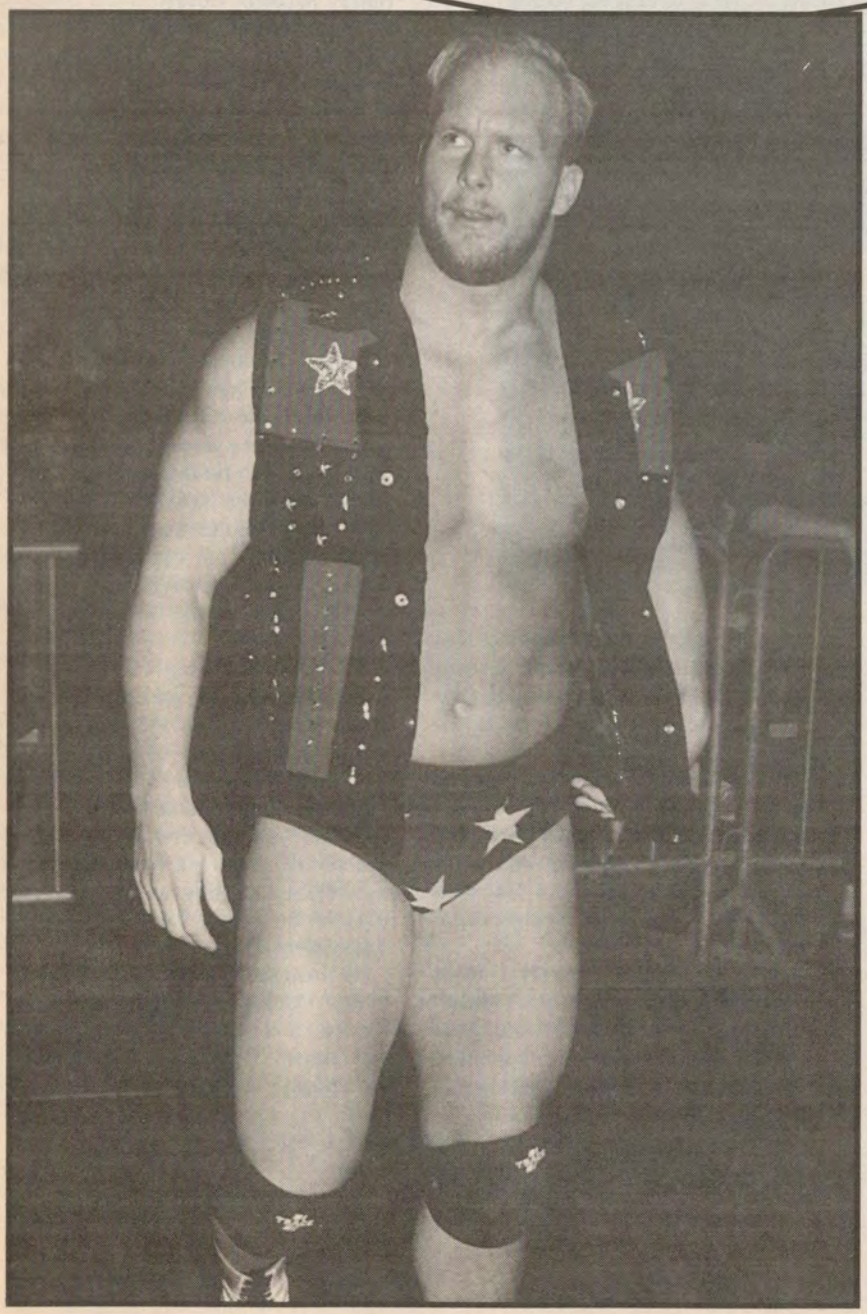
Bockwinkel doesn't remember the end. A devastating karate chop sent him spinning through the ropes to the concrete floor, and instead of climbing back through the ropes he careened up the aisle to the safety of his dressing room.

"I wasn't trying to escape, Nick insists. "I simply didn't know where I was and was staggering along blind."

The explanation makes sense because many men have been knocked unconscious by El Mongol's judo tactics, but the fans figure that as long as a man's on his feet he should be able to continue wrestling.

"I thought I was winning them over," Bockwinkel said, "but now I have to start all over again. Every once in awhile I consider going back to Hawaii, but I came here to accomplish something, and I won't leave until I succeed." □

STEVE AUSTIN'S STUNNING RECOVERY



Steve Austin turned a lot of heads when he returned to the ring only a few months after suffering a serious knee injury. His haste might cost him his career

By Steve Anderson

EVER SINCE HE entered WCW in the summer of 1991, "Stunning" Steve Austin has gotten recognition worldwide for his cockiness, cunning, and ring skills.

When he was injured in a match against Hacksaw Duggan, after Big Van Vader allegedly sabotaged the ring, Steve Austin got recognition for being unlucky.

Now, while trying to mount a premature comeback, Steve Austin is getting recognition for being impatient.

It's a story played over and over again in wrestling. Young star makes good. Young star wins title after title, never going more than a few months without a championship belt around his waist. Young star suffers near career-ending injury. Young star stays on the shelf until his injury completely heals and makes triumphant return.

All but the last statement applies to Austin. Doctors told him that after he suffered torn liga-

ments in his left knee in November, he would be out for about a year, with a best case scenario of a summer return to the ring. Suddenly, however, rumors began

"Sure the knee hurts, but I'll be fine," Austin continued. "I'm young. My ligaments and tendons will heal no matter if I'm wrestling or lying around."

Will Impatience Finish What Vader Started?

to surface that the former Hollywood Blond was training in the gym. He was determined to return ASAP, despite the severity of his medical problems.

Then at a television taping in Orlando in February, the rumors were validated. There was Austin. Not commentating, not managing, but wrestling. Wrestling just three months after his knee gave way in the Duggan match. He beat Marcus Alexander Bagwell in his first match back, but looked rusty and suffered a cut to his mouth that required 12 stitches to close.

"With a bleeding mouth, you can wrestle," said Barry Windham, who still has not recovered from major reconstructive knee surgery. "But Austin blew out a knee! Man, I know what that's all about! He's tempting fate."

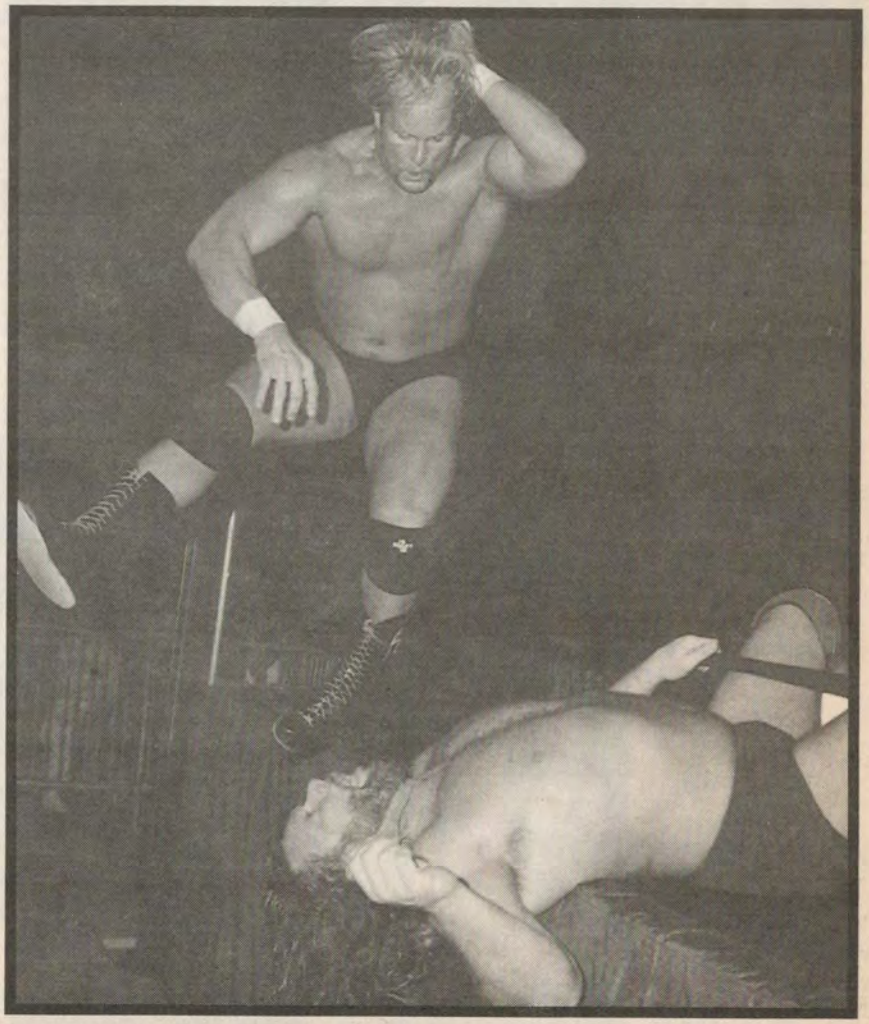
Austin saw former WWF stars Randy Savage, Brutus Beefcake, and Avalanche taking over WCW along with Hulk Hogan. Most of the fans' attention is now focused on them. The classic Austin-Rick Steamboat battles from the summer of 1994 battles are distant memories. Instead of resting, Austin is wrestling.

"Look, I have toiled in WCW longer than almost anyone," Austin lamented at a recent training session in Atlanta. "I wasn't in WCW but for a cup of coffee before I won the TV title. Then another. Then the World tag team title. Then a U.S. title. Then another. I'm not gonna let *anyone* steal my thunder. I was on my way to winning the World title. Now I'm ready again!"

But what about the injury?

He is indeed young. Only a six-year veteran, he should have many great years and many championships ahead of him. But jeopardizing that future by defying doctor's orders and coming back a few months early doesn't seem to make sense.

"What would you know?" sneered Austin to a group of reporters. "The worst thing that



Steve Austin's troubles began when he attempted this elbowsmash and—allegedly because of what Big Van Vader had done—blew out his left knee. Now he's back, but the knee isn't even close to being full healed.

could happen to you guys is some paper cuts and writer's cramp. Besides, you don't win a world title by laying on a couch and watching television. You win it by getting in the ring and showing some guts."

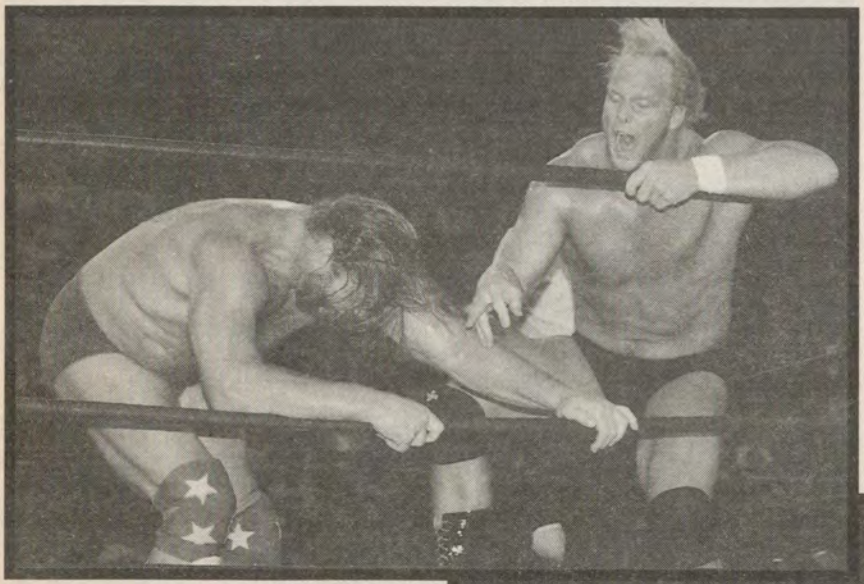
There is also another underlying issue behind Austin's decision to return. He is painfully aware that the longer he stays away, the more likely the average wrestling fan is to forget about him.

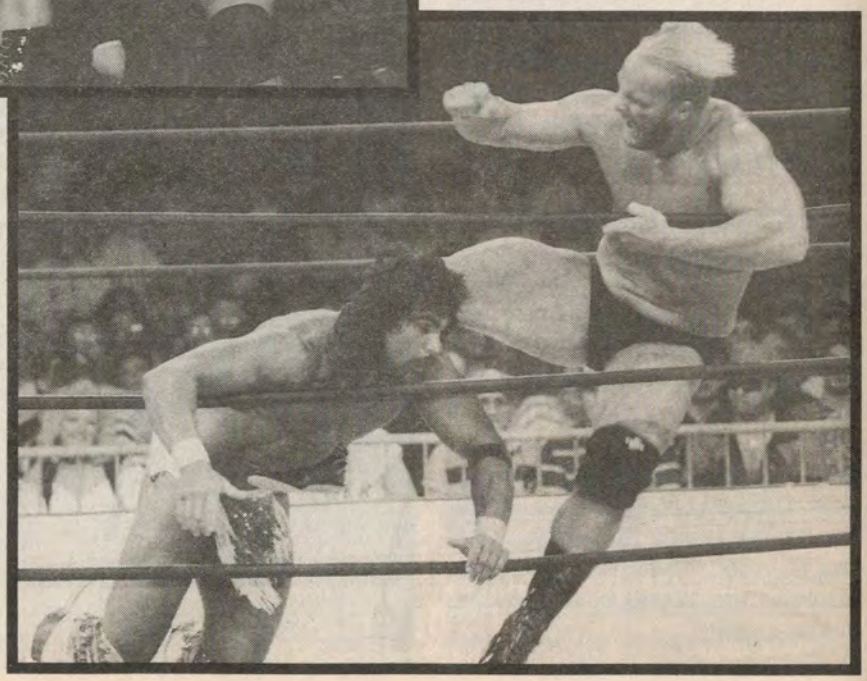
"I don't care what the damn fans think," Austin said. "But they sure as heck are not gonna forget about me and all my accomplishments."

Then there's the Vader factor. As documented in the April 1995 issue of INSIDE WRESTLING, strong evidence points to Big Van Vader's involvement in sabotaging the ring to ensure Austin's absence from the ring and from Harley Race's managerial prowess. Sources say Vader paid off a ring attendant to loosen the boards under the ring during an Austin-Duggan bout. Then, as Austin went to leap from the ring apron onto the floor, the ring gave out a little. Austin's left knee gave out a lot. Vader denied the allegations against him.

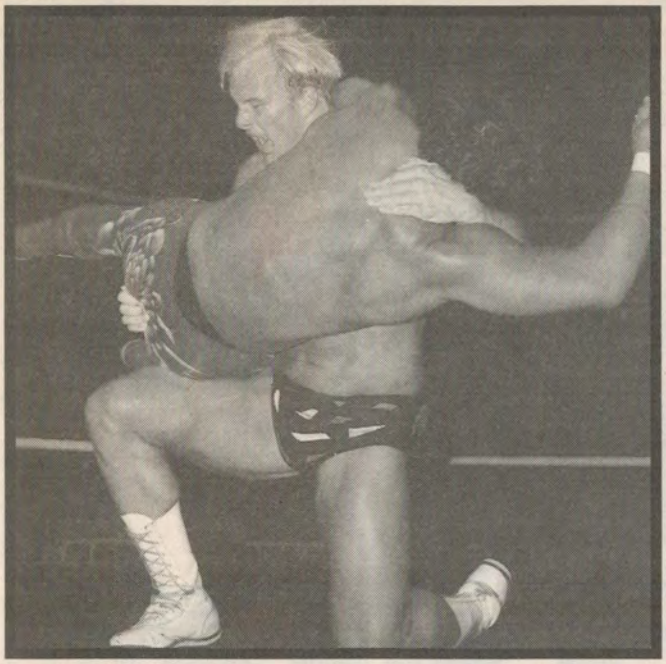
Austin continues to refuse comment on that situation. There was, however, tension in the locker room in Orlando when Austin returned for action, wrestling gear in tow, and his eyes met Vader's surprised, yet menacing gaze. He kept walking, never looking away from Vader's eyes. No words were spoken. Austin just stared at Vader as if to say, "I'm back, big man."

"Look, I'm a wrestler," Austin barked later. "That's what I do, and I do it better than anyone. Line 'em all up: Hogan, Duggan, Savage, Beefcake, Sting, Avalanche and ... anyone else. I'll knock 'em all down with one knee



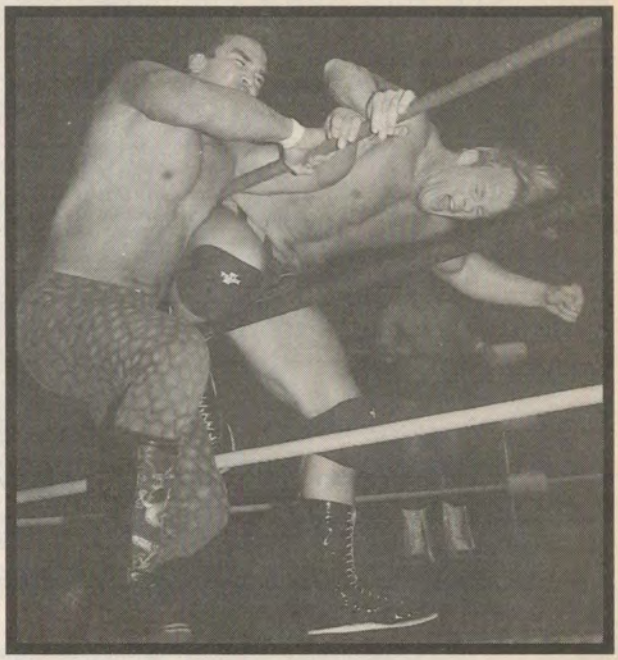


Austin has a great repertoire of moves. He does, however, rely heavily on kicks, as he showed against both Hacksaw Duggan (above) and Johnny B. Badd (right). Don't look for him to use the left leg to do much kicking now.



With the ligaments in his left knee still very weak, "Stunning" Steve will probably have trouble supporting himself enough to execute even a basic move such as a backbreaker.

Austin drives his knee into Rick Steamboat's stomach. With Steamboat retired and Austin injured, their battles were all but forgotten. Austin hinted that a fear of being a forgotten man influenced his decision to return so quickly.



tied behind my back."

Austin stopped short of adding Big Van Vader to his laundry list of future opponents. He either doesn't believe the allegations against his former stablemate or wants Vader to think that he doesn't. No matter what physical condition Austin is in, he's still crafty, cunning, and very dangerous.

"What was that Wyatt Earp line in that movie *Tombstone*?" the former Hollywood Blond wondered out loud. "Oh, yeah: 'You tell 'em I'm comin' and hell's comin' with me.'"

Austin's attitude, coupled with his extraordinary athletic skills, is what has made him successful. He feels he must continue to win at any and all costs. For Austin's opponents, that recklessness and impatience means trouble.

For Austin, that recklessness and impatience could result in a victory for the WCW World heavyweight title.

It could also end his career ... even without any "help" from Vader. □

Austin held the U.S. title for eight months in 1994. He is now focused on doing whatever it takes to win a world title. That obsession might bring his career to an abrupt end very soon!

THE BEGINNING OF THE END?

By Chris Bernucca

THE QUESTIONS BEGAN just seconds after the flying axhandle elbowsmash had found its target. Among members of the media present, plenty of eyebrows were raised halfway up the forehead and a few tongues were planted firmly in cheeks.

Was it a cheap shot Randy Savage had delivered onto Hulk Hogan ... or had Savage just underestimated how much trouble his partner was actually in? Was Savage saving his tag team from certain defeat in this bout ... or was he guaranteeing himself a singles match for the WCW World title? After countless replays and sound bytes, nobody is really sure.

Perhaps the only thing more surprising than Savage's actions was what had brought it on. The "Macho Man" and Hogan were heavily favored to dispense with Brutus "The Butcher" Beefcake and Kevin Sullivan at Clash of the Champions XXX. But Hogan, perhaps showing his age, had gotten himself locked in a sleeperhold by "The Butcher." He was tied up for more than a minute and was at some level of unconsciousness before Savage came to the rescue ... or so it seemed.

Randy Savage says he was helping his teammate when he brought Hulk Hogan back to consciousness with a flying elbowsmash. The history between the two men says otherwise

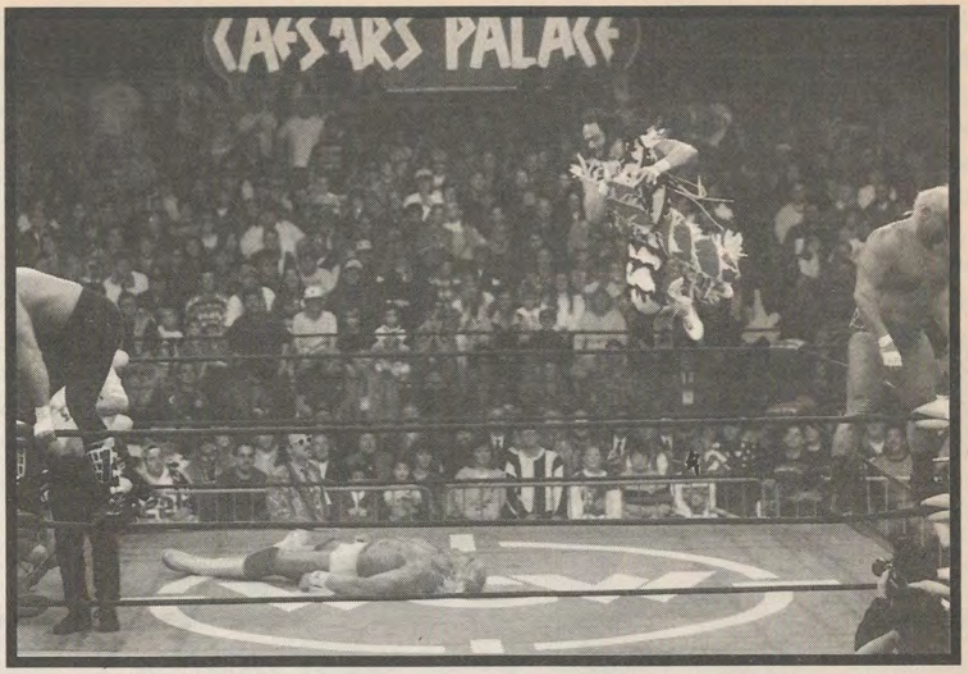
"Yeah, it caught me by surprise," Sullivan said. "That's Savage's move, isn't it? I mean, usually he saves that for finishing someone off, doesn't he? Why would he use it on his partner?"

Good question, Kevin. No matter how effective the sleeperhold is, its victim can almost always be brought back to consciousness with a simple slap on the upper back. Savage had used a shotgun to kill a mosquito, and now he was facing the full-court press of the media.

"I don't know what you're talking about," Savage said after the match. "You guys spend too much time analyzing matches and looking for something that just isn't there. My partner was in trouble, so I helped him. I wanted to make sure I brought him out of it. That's all it was!"

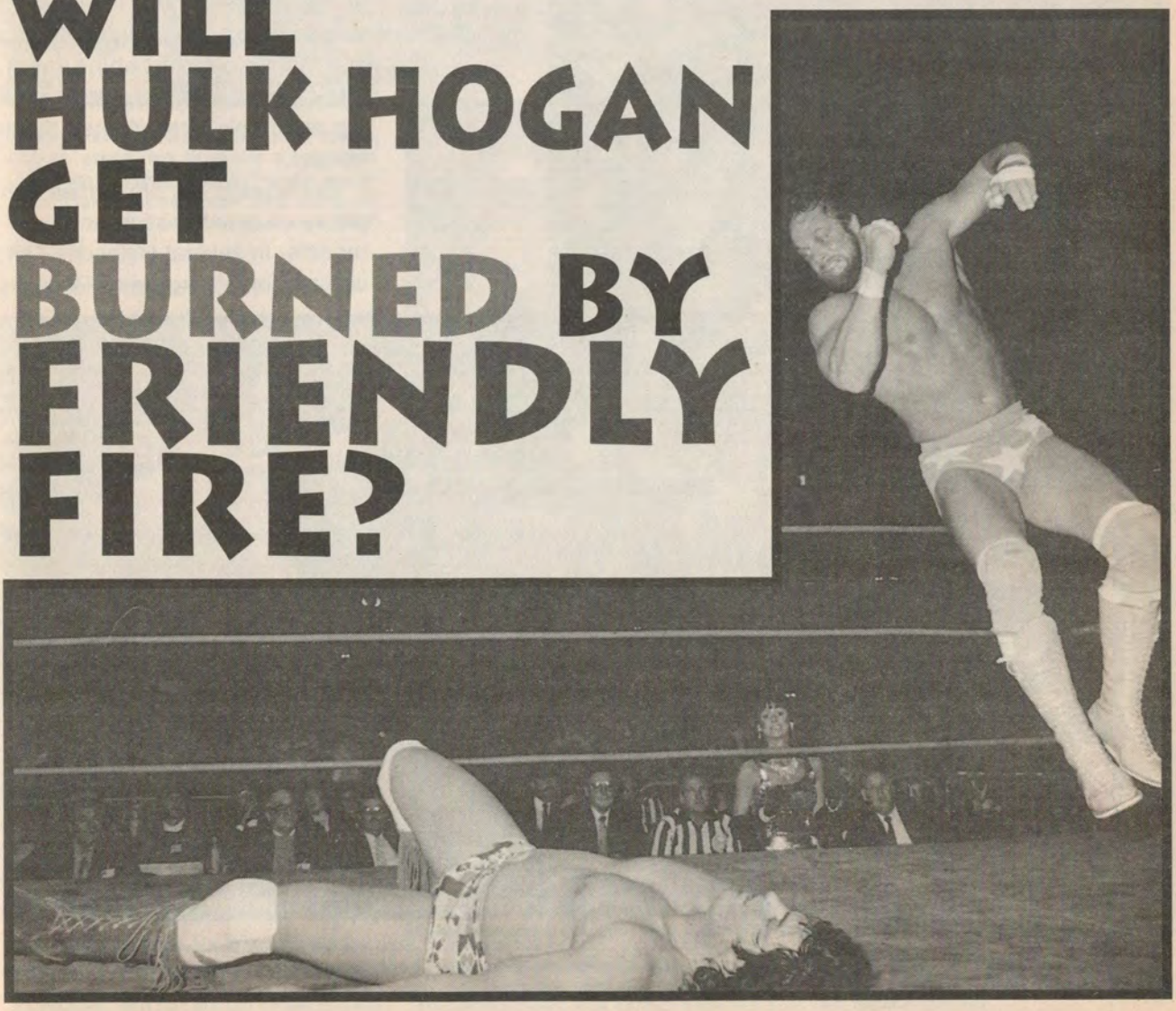
In bringing Hogan out of the sleeper with an elbowsmash, Savage had nearly sent Hogan to

Photos by
Chris Farina



Randy Savage used his flying elbowsmash to wake up Hulk Hogan at Clash of the Champions (right); he usually uses it as a devastating finishing maneuver (below). Now Hogan isn't exactly sure what Savage's motives were.

WILL HULK HOGAN GET BURNED BY FRIENDLY FIRE?



the hospital. The WCW World champion was rubbing his neck as he held off the blitz of questions after the match. He did not realize what had happened until a scribe let him in on it.

"Why should I have hard feelings toward Savage?" asked Hogan.

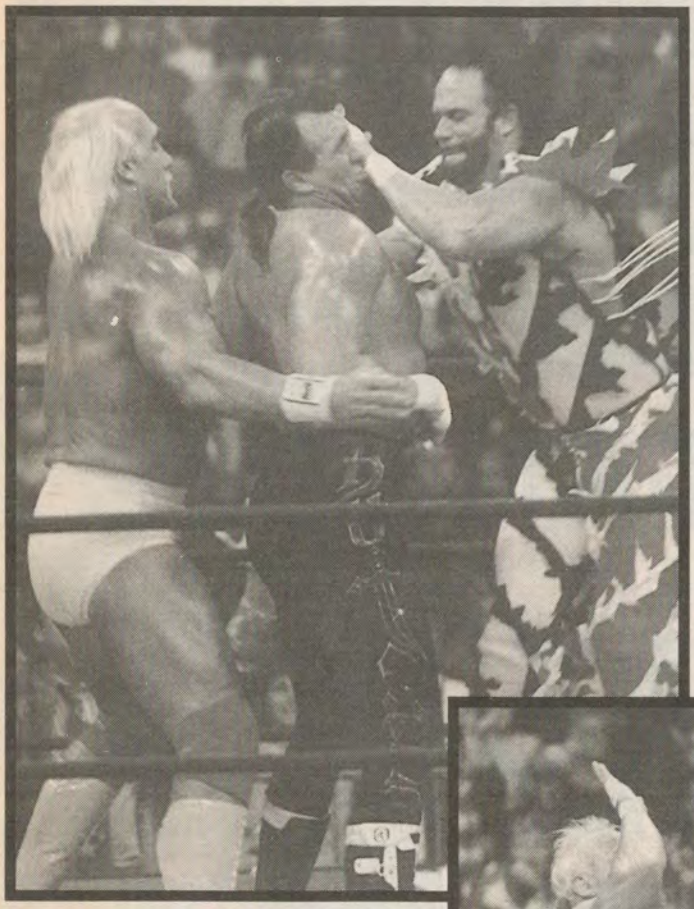
"I don't know, brother," replied the champ. "My head's a little woozy right now, and I don't want to say something stupid that will get both of us in trouble, so I'm not going to answer that question. These things have a way of answering themselves, my friend. Right now, I just want to take a shower and get some rest."

Hogan was trying to give Savage the benefit of the doubt, but all he did was raise more doubt, especially in the eye of impartial observers.

"There's too much history between them for Hogan not to question Savage," said broadcaster Bobby Heenan, who remembers the heated feud between the men in the WWF. "If I were Hogan, I'd be watching my back right now. But it's hard to do that when you're asleep."

When Savage arrived in WCW several months ago, he said he would either shake Hogan's hand or slap his face. When the two shook hands at Starrcade '94, it was taken as a sign that they had put their old feud behind them. Their decision to join forces as a tag team only strengthened those notions.

But Savage is a proud man with plenty of determination and a bitter side. In several instances—situations involving Jake Roberts



Hogan and Savage worked well together in pummeling Brutus Beefcake at the Clash, but that was to be expected. Does the "Macho Man" have an ulterior motive in teaming with Hogan?

"He nailed you with an elbowsmash," replied the writer.

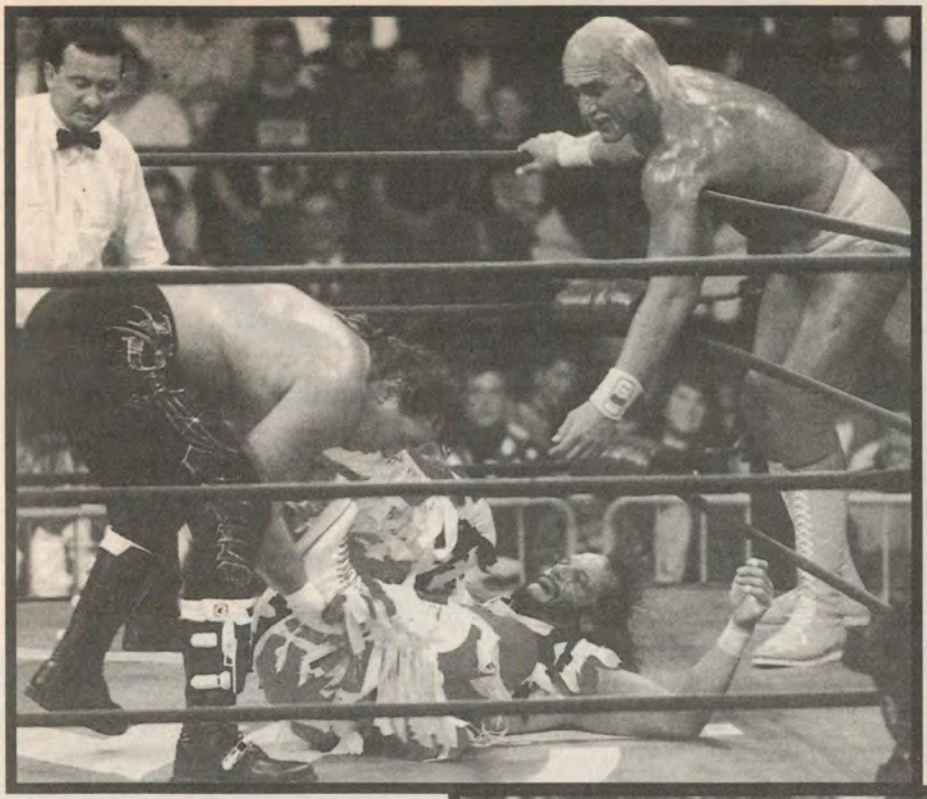
"When was that?" Hogan asked.

"After you went unconscious from the sleeper," the writer said.

"An elbowsmash?" Hogan wondered out loud. Media members slowly nodded their heads, looking for a reaction. When one wasn't offered, an attempt was made to extricate one.

"Do you think Savage is using this tag team as a front to target you and the title?" asked another writer.

Once woken up, Hogan took care of Sullivan and "The Butcher" by himself with ease. He might be on his own again soon if Savage is, as some have suggested, secretly plotting to destroy him.



Savage kicks away Beefcake, while Hogan struggles to make a tag. The "Hulkster" actually didn't even know what the "Macho Man" had done to wake him up until a reporter explained it to him.

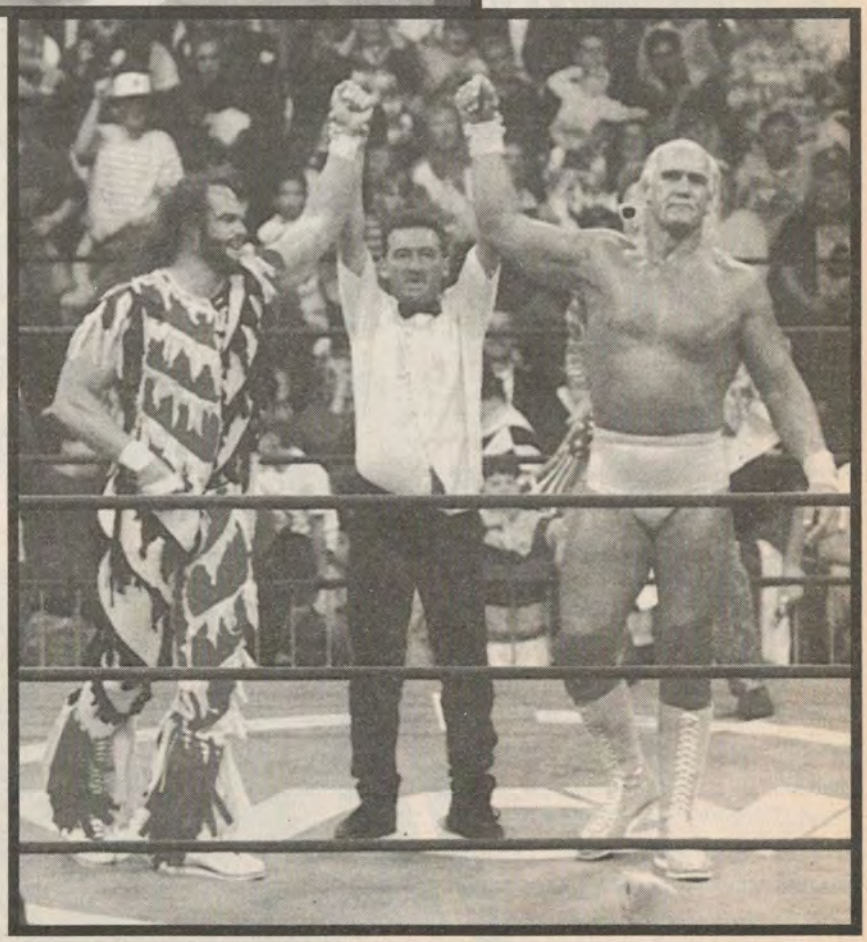
and Jerry Lawler come to mind—he has sprinted out of inactivity and into a heated feud. This may be another one of those instances, although Savage denies it.

"Whatever happened between me and Hulk in the past is just that—the past," Savage snapped. "You can call my axhandle anything you want, because that's what you're going to do anyway. But I know why I used it, and Hulk knows, too."

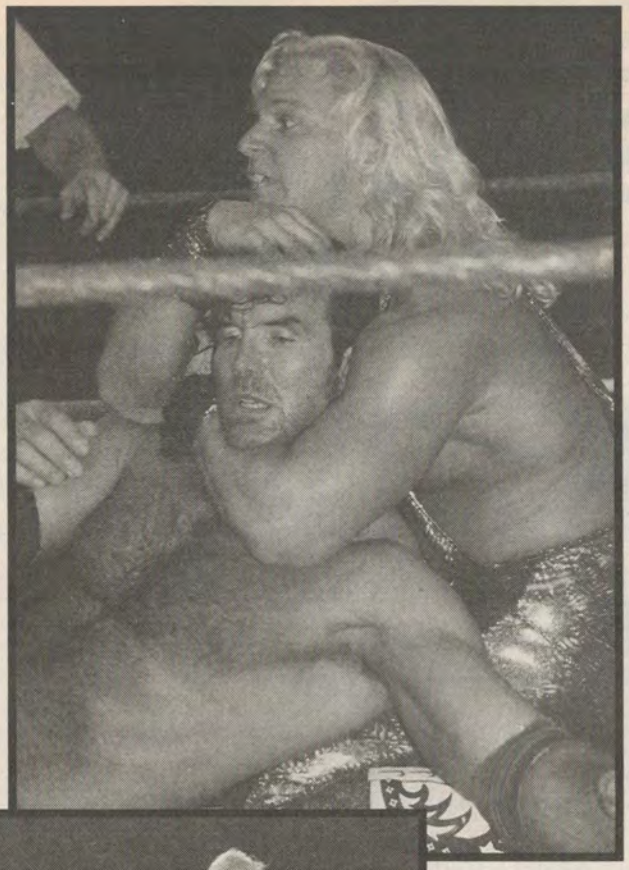
Those words may sound a bit strange to Hogan. Right now, the only thing he knows is that he has to be careful about whom he allows to penetrate his entourage. Plenty of long-time friends have followed him into WCW, pledging their allegiance to the champion. We found out how solid those allegiances were when Beefcake turned on the man with whom he grew up. Hogan must make sure that he doesn't get burned again, because the next time could cost him his title—or worse.

Hogan left that night with a hot towel around his neck, reducing the throbbing in his upper spine. He said he was going to spend the rest of the evening alone, and a team of security guards gave him an escort to his car in the parking lot. But even the presence of manager Jimmy Hart and a half-dozen burly men in blue windbreakers was not enough to make him feel at ease.

As he left the arena, he looked over his shoulder, wincing in pain. □



All was well between Savage and Hogan at the end of the match. Hogan probably believed Savage when he told him he was acting in his best interests by delivering the elbowsmash; that kind of trust has cost him before, though.



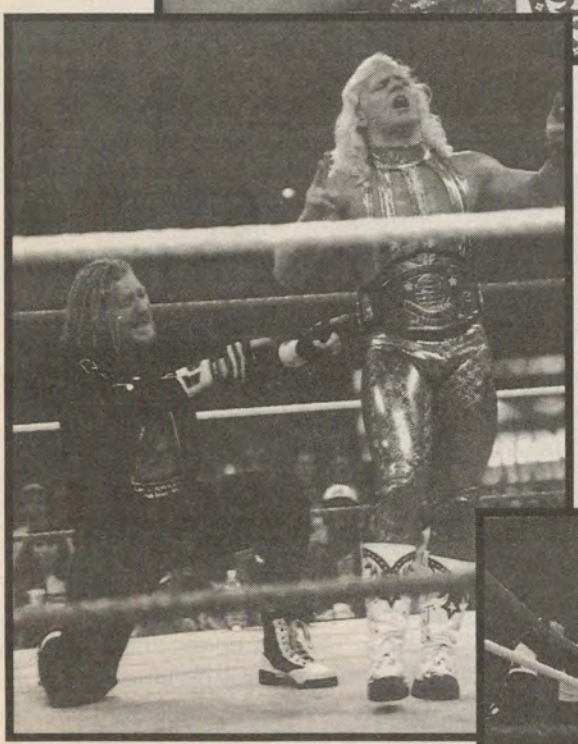
Jeff Jarrett applies a sleeperhold on Razor Ramon, but he seems to have his eyes focused on something else. It's probably the aisle leading to his dressing room, which is exactly where he heads when things get tough.

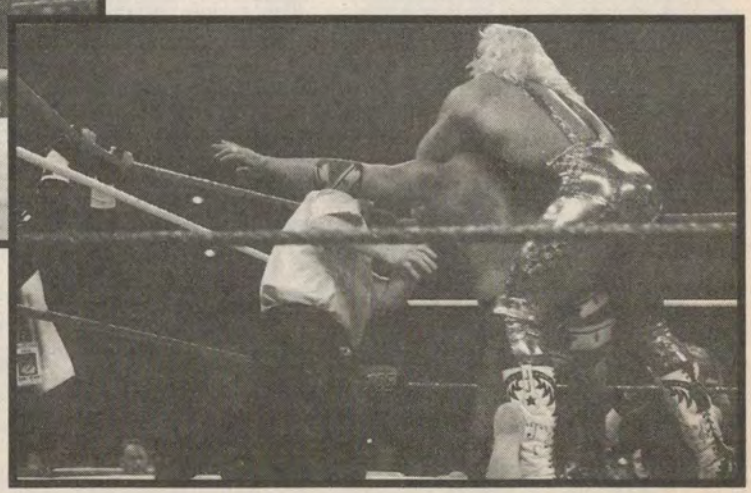
tests the patience and intelligence of the fans. When the WWF hypes an Intercontinental title match between Ramon and Jarrett, it should give the fans a title match between Ramon and Jarrett. Instead, it has been providing nothing more than an advanced version of a 10-year-old boy taking his basketball home and ending the game because no one will pass to him.

Tunney can't be so stupid to overlook simple economics and think that the fans do not matter. Every business trying to make money relies on the customer. If the customer is dissatisfied, he will take his business elsewhere. If the customer takes his business elsewhere, revenues decline and cutbacks become necessary. The fans pay the salaries of all WWF employees, from the secretaries at Titan Tower to the wrestlers to Tunney himself.

The decision regarding Jarrett is not one Tunney hasn't faced before. In 1993, he was presented with a similar problem. In typical Tunney fashion, he screwed it up. You get the impression that Tunney sits in his office at Titan Tower in Stamford, Connecticut, flipping a coin that always lands on its edge.

Having won the World tag team





Jarrett and The Roadie are real proud of what they have accomplished in the WWF (above). They shouldn't be. On the rare occasions Jarrett doesn't flee from the ring, Roadie usually finds a way to get him disqualified (right).

SHOW SOME GUTS, JACK TUNNEY:

STRIP JEFF JARRETT OF THE INTERCONTINENTAL TITLE!

IT IS TIME WWF President Jack Tunney did the right thing. For too long, Tunney has made a career of doing either the wrong thing or nothing at all. He has a chance to erase all of the bad history associated with his tenure if he will just do the right thing and strip Jeff Jarrett of the Intercontinental title.

Everyone who follows wrestling knows Jarrett deserves to be stripped of the title. He has been the most cowardly champion in the WWF since the tag team title run of Money Inc. several years ago. Almost every one of his championship matches against Razor Ramon has ended with Jarrett walking out of the ring with his title intact and the reputation of the belt and the federation further sullied. If the matches don't end on countouts, they end when The Roadie interferes and gets "Double-J" disqualified.

It has gotten to the point at which nobody cares about the Intercontinental title anymore, and that's bad news for the WWF. The Intercontinental title is the federation's second-highest honor and usually serves as a steppingstone to the coveted World championship. If that's where Jarrett thinks he is headed, the WWF is really in trouble.

WWF PRESIDENT JACK TUNNEY HAS YET ANOTHER CHANCE TO SHOW THE FANS HE CARES ABOUT THEM. ALL HE HAS TO DO IS SHOW THE GUTS JEFF JARRETT HAS NEVER DISPLAYED AS CHAMPION

There is nothing Ramon can do about the situation. He can continue to request title matches against Jarrett, continue to show up for those matches, and continue to wrestle the best he knows how. And at the first sign of trouble, Jarrett leaves Ramon standing in the ring as he strolls back to the locker room, apathetic to the catcalls from fans who paid good money to see a title match battled to its conclusion. Instead, they get a ridiculous forfeit that allows the champion to keep the belt with a cowardly act.

Tunney, however, can do plenty about the situation. He is the president, which means no one else in the WWF can make a decision without his approval. If he wants to, he can change everything about the WWF, from which referees are hired to what souvenirs are sold to what computers are used in the office.

Sometimes these decisions are easy ones; Tunney has made a million easy decisions behind closed doors that are far too boring and mundane for the pages of this magazine. But sometimes the decisions are tough ones that will have both immediate and long-term effects on the WWF; Tunney doesn't seem to be in a hurry to make any of those. He is usually content to let the issue run its course and decide itself.

But in doing so, Tunney often

belts, Ted DiBiase and Irwin R. Schyster were making a mockery of the rule that allows champions to keep titles with losses via disqualification or countout. The pair would show up for matches and compete until they felt they were in danger of losing their title. Then they would just leave with the belts, counting their money while being counted out.

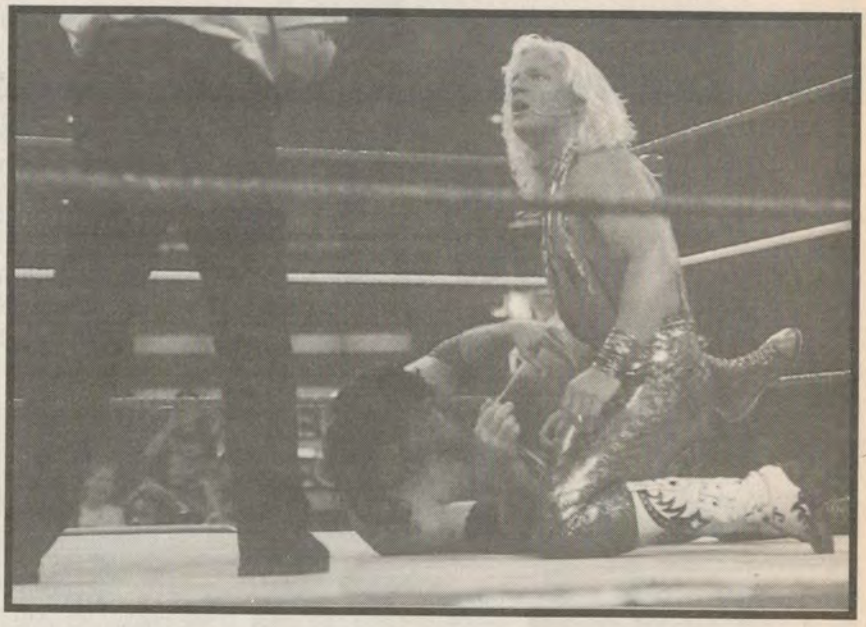
Tunney did not strip them. In fact, he allowed them to compete in a title match against Brutus Beefcake and Hulk Hogan at WrestleMania IX. When DiBiase and Schyster began their stroll that day, the referee ruled that they would lose the title if they were counted out of the ring. That decision obviously came from someone else in the organization, and although it came out of left field, it was welcomed by the fans and the media who had grown tired of the antics of DiBiase and Schyster.

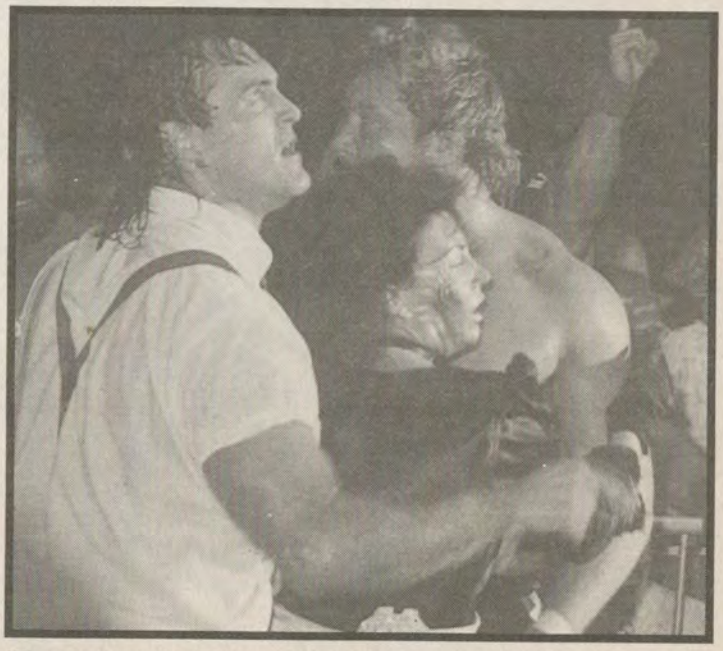
There is no difference between the behavior of Money Inc. and Jarrett, except when you factor in how Jarrett won the belt. Ramon, who had been a true champion, had suffered an injury and was not fit to wrestle after he was counted out at the Royal Rumble. He was going to take a powder and keep his title until Jarrett called him a coward. Against his better judgment, Ramon returned to the ring to continue the battle, but was pinned by Jarrett.

Tunney has options. He can force Jarrett to wrestle the match to a pinfall or submission conclusion. He can pass legislation indicating the difference between being counted out and just walking away, which many fan favorites would like to see. He can even strip Jarrett of the title for failing to defend it honorably. He is the WWF president. He can do what he wants!

Show some guts, Jack Tunney. Show us that there's more to your job than flipping a coin. Show the fans that you care about them and you respect the integrity of wrestling. Show us you know how to use the power and responsibility that comes with your title. Show us by stripping Jeff Jarrett of the Intercontinental title. □

"Double-J" looks stunned when the referee forces him to break a chokehold. Imagine how shocked he would be if Jack Tunney called to tell him he had been stripped of the I-C title!





When Irwin R. Schyster and Ted DiBiase were WWF world tag team champs two years ago, they made a habit of leaving the ring to save their belts. Tunney did nothing; he has a chance to set a precedent now.

HOT SEAT

THE GANGSTAS

"WE HAVE ENOUGH HATRED FOR EVERYBODY"

MUSTAFA SAED AND New Jack —The Gangstas —cause controversy everywhere they go. And even some places they don't.

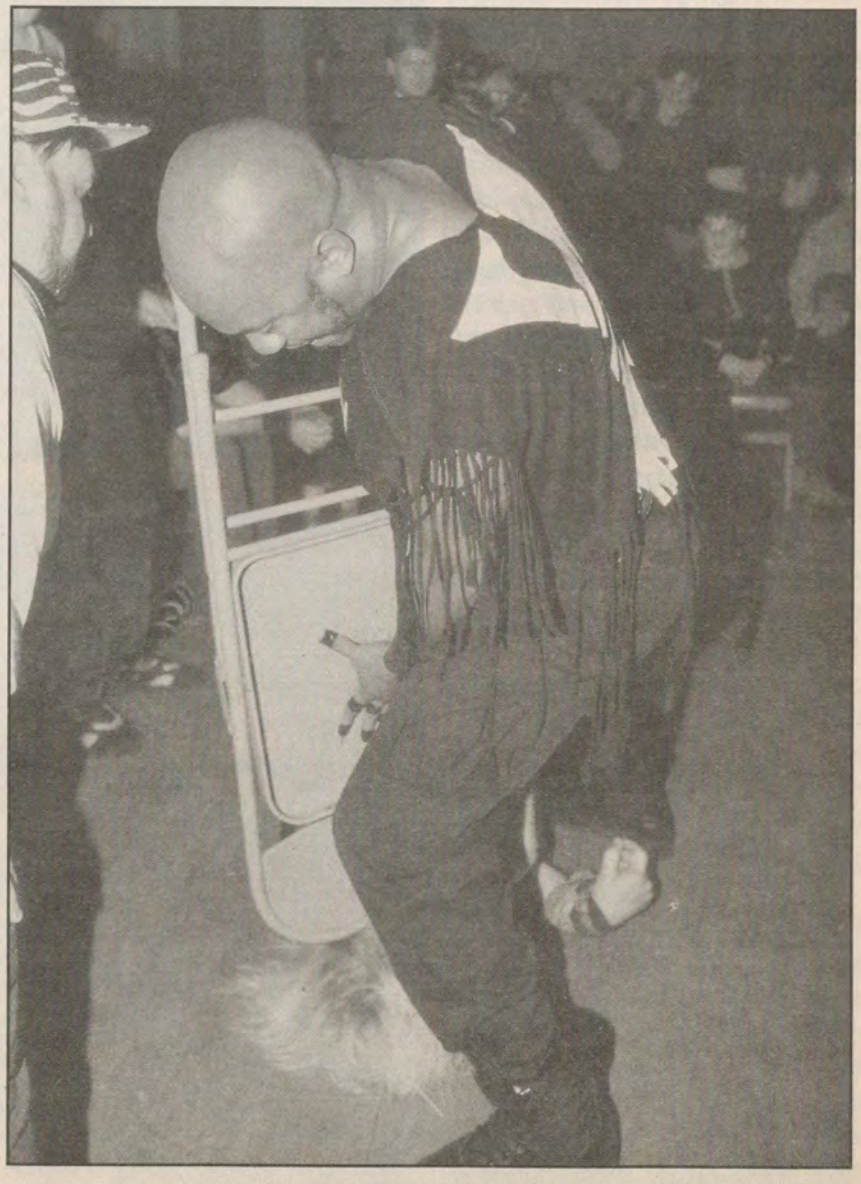
They have never been to the offices of ***Inside Wrestling****, but they have managed to create a rift in our editorial ranks. The debate rages around this basic question: Just how does one cover a tag team whose language and views are immoral and unsuitable for a family publication, but whose influence on the sport, particularly in the Smoky Mountain area, cannot be ignored?*

"I will not allow this magazine to provide a forum for The Gangstas' racism," said Publisher Stu Saks.

"But they are making news and our job is to cover the news," countered Associate Publisher Craig Peters.

Fortunately, a compromise was reached. We would allow The Gangstas their time on the "Hotseat," but they would first have to agree to discuss wrestling and wrestling only.

Currently, The Gangstas are waging wars on two fronts: one against SMW tag team champions The Rock 'n' Roll Express and one against The Heavenly Bodies. Those two teams have one thing in common: They are both managed by Jim Cornette, the man Saed and Jack hate more than



New Jack assaults Rick Morton with a chair. The Rock 'n' Roll Express beat The Gangstas for the SMW tag title, but Jack and Mustafa Saed still don't think much of the team they call old and slow.

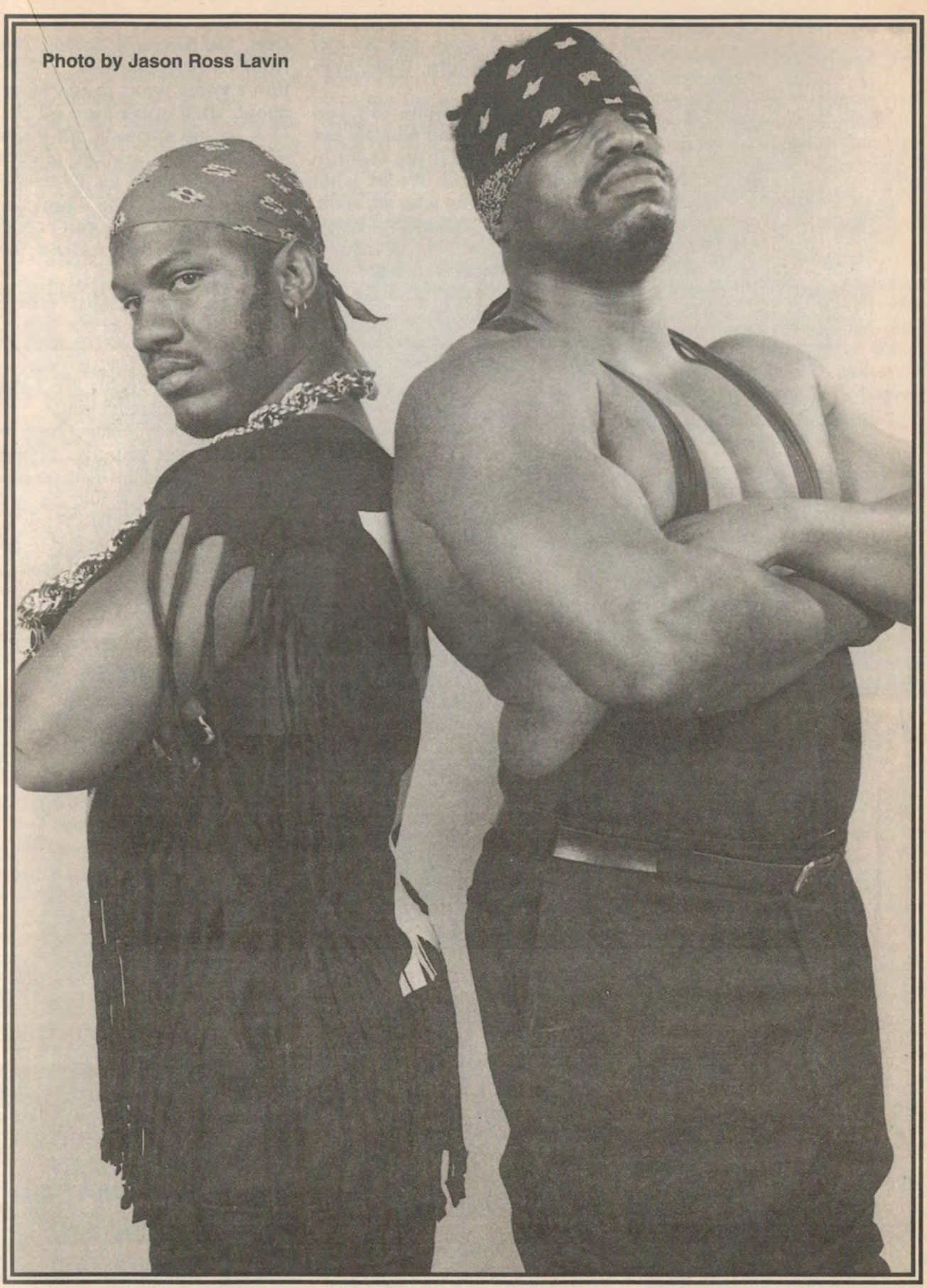
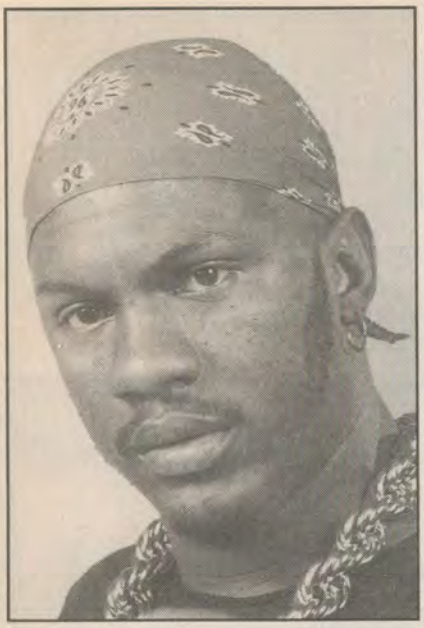


Photo by Jason Ross Lavin



"We're going all the way to the top, and we're going to keep on saying what we feel until we get there!"

—New Jack

any other.

With everyone wanting a chance to battle them, The Gangstas have a lot on their minds. Editorial Assistant Ed Emelett flew to Knoxville, Tennessee, to talk with them, but, as instructed, laid a few ground rules before getting the interview started. "I told them that absolutely no racial remarks or slurs would be tolerated," Emelett said. "I was there to talk about wrestling. Any racial remarks, and the interview would be over."

The Gangstas reluctantly agreed.

ED EMELETT: For much of last year, you guys tore through Smoky Mountain and did just about everything you wanted to do. Now it's 1995, and it looks like you ticked off a lot of people, Jim Cornette in particular. Everyone wants a crack at you, and you guys aren't even the Smoky Mountain champs. What happened?

NEW JACK: Lemme tell you something: Me and Mustafa are still the toughest tag team in Smoky Mountain. We do what we want, beat up who we want, and say what we want.

EMELETT: Not here you won't. Remember our agreement?

MUSTAFA SAED: Who do you think you are tryin' to talk to us like that? Listen up, you ...

EMELETT: Wait a minute! What's wrong with you guys? Our agreement said no racial remarks! You were the ones who wanted this interview anyway! If you don't like the way I conduct it, I might as well leave now. Are you going to abide by the agreement, or should I head for the door?

SAED: Just ask your damn questions!

EMELETT: All right, now let's talk about wrestling. All of this controversy began when Jim Cornette approached you about being your manager. Cornette has a tremendous track record. Why didn't you accept his offer?

JACK: Cornette's nothing but a nasty ...

EMELETT: Hold it right there!

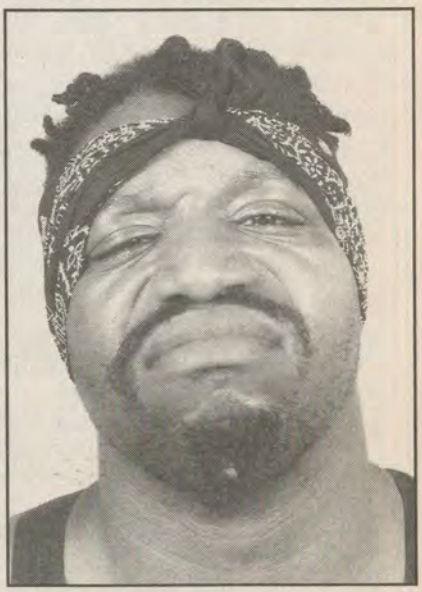
JACK: I mean, Cornette's just a stinkin' mama's boy who won't ever know what it's like to be part of The Gangstas. The Gangstas stand for all that is wrong in the world. Me and Mustafa have to fight to get what is rightfully ours: respect. Nobody respects us because of the things we say. That's fine by us, because we ain't going to stop saying the things that we feel are right. Besides, those people will have to respect us when we strap the SMW tag team belts around our waists again. Everyone knows that's inevitable.

SAED: All these washed-up tag teams are coming after us. Big deal. The Heavenly Bodies, The Rock 'n Roll Express ... they don't know what tough is all about. We'll crush them all like ants on the sidewalk. All these people—these stinkin' lowlife fans—can't stand us. Everyone wants a piece of The Gangstas. You know what? We don't care! We have enough hatred for everybody!

EMELETT: So you're saying it doesn't matter what color, race, or creed someone is, you're going to hate him and insult him anyway?

JACK: That's right. We hate everybody, including you.

EMELETT: Okay. Getting back to Cornette, after you guys turned him down, he did the thing no one *ever* thought he would do: He signed to manage The Rock 'n Roll Express and promised to be in their corner for matches against you guys. If Cornette is willing to manage The Rock 'n Roll Ex-



"Me and Jack will follow Jim Cornette wherever he goes. We'll haunt him until the day he dies!"

—Mustafa Saed

press, two guys he has hated for what seems like forever, he must really have it in for you guys.

JACK: The Rock 'n' Rolls are trash. Take a look at them, and then take a look at us. How can you compare the two teams? Morton and Gibson are two over-the-hill nobodies who love to hear the little girls cheer for them. Mustafa and me, well, we're just plain awesome. Like I said before, we say what we want, we beat up whoever we want, and we do whatever we want. We're the tag team of the future, and there is nothing anyone can do about it. We're going all the way to the top, and we're going to keep on saying what we feel until we get there! Cornette got in our way, so we busted his face up. But he's only one person on our list.

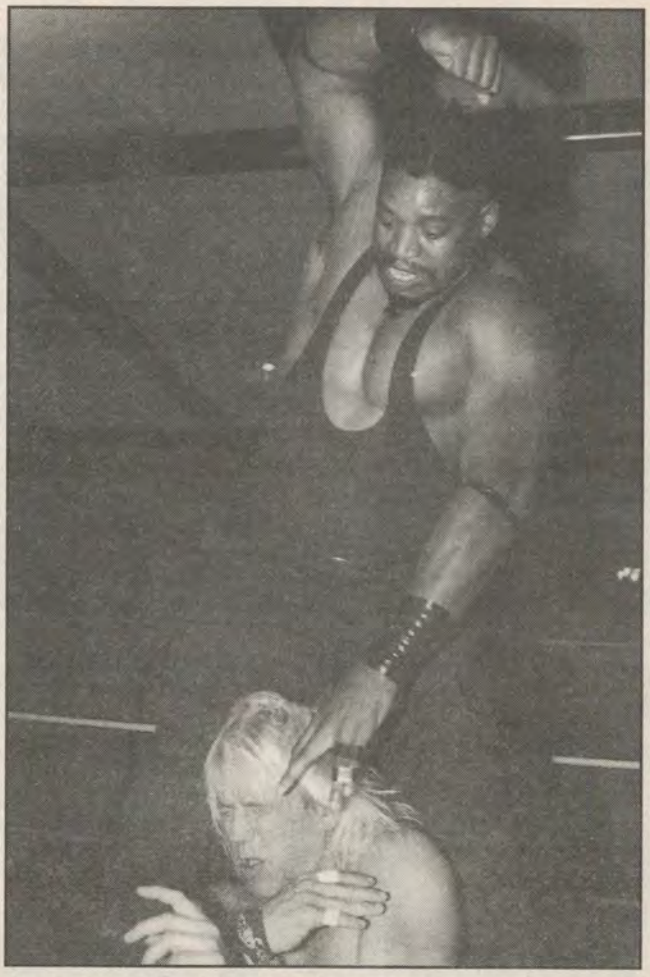
EMELETT: What do you mean?

SAED: It is our job to make sure that everyone in Smoky Mountain Wrestling is destroyed. The Rock 'n' Roll Express, The Heavenly Bodies ...

EMELETT: Speaking of The Heavenly Bodies ...

SAED: Shut up! I'm not finished yet! The Rock 'n' Roll Express, the Bodies, Bob Armstrong, Cornette, Tracey Smothers ... everyone must be destroyed. Me and Jack will fight to the death to make sure that we will be heard, and we'll win the Smoky Mountain tag team belts in the process.

EMELETT: The Heavenly Bodies were recently reinstated back into Smoky Mountain Wrestling by Commissioner Bob Armstrong and immediately signed for matches against you. Now you have fought both the Bodies and the Rock 'n' Rolls, and both teams are managed by Jim Cornette. How do the Rock 'n' Rolls compare to the Bodies?



Saed takes aim at Morton's head. The Gangstas expect to eliminate the Rock 'n' Rolls in the very near future. They intend to do the same to Jim Cornette and anyone associated with him as well.

JACK: Man, an actual intelligent question coming from ...

EMELETT: Watch what you say, or I'll end this interview!

JACK: Those two loser tag teams don't even match up with me and Mustafa. The Rock 'n' Rolls are old and slow, and The Heavenly Bodies are ugly, slow, and stupid. I guess if they wrestled each other, it would be a pretty decent match, but either one against us, it's like Mike Tyson against Tommy Morrison or Gerry Cooney.

EMELETT: There's also a rumor floating around that Cornette and the Rock 'n' Rolls have been having some problems behind closed doors. It seems that they can't decide on whether to keep Cornette on as a full-time manager.

SAED: That doesn't matter to us! Cornette and those guys can argue all they want, because we'll beat them with Cornette or without Cornette. People just don't understand. If Cornette manages the Rock 'n Rolls, big deal! We're going to run over them all anyway. If Cornette decided to just manage The Heavenly Bodies, we don't care! We're going to beat them up, too. And if Cornette gets scared of The Gangstas and leaves wrestling for good, then so what? He has to pay for what he did to us. Me and Jack will follow Jim Cornette wherever he goes. We'll never go away. We'll haunt him until the day he dies. That guy is a ...

EMELETT: Watch it! I won't warn you again!

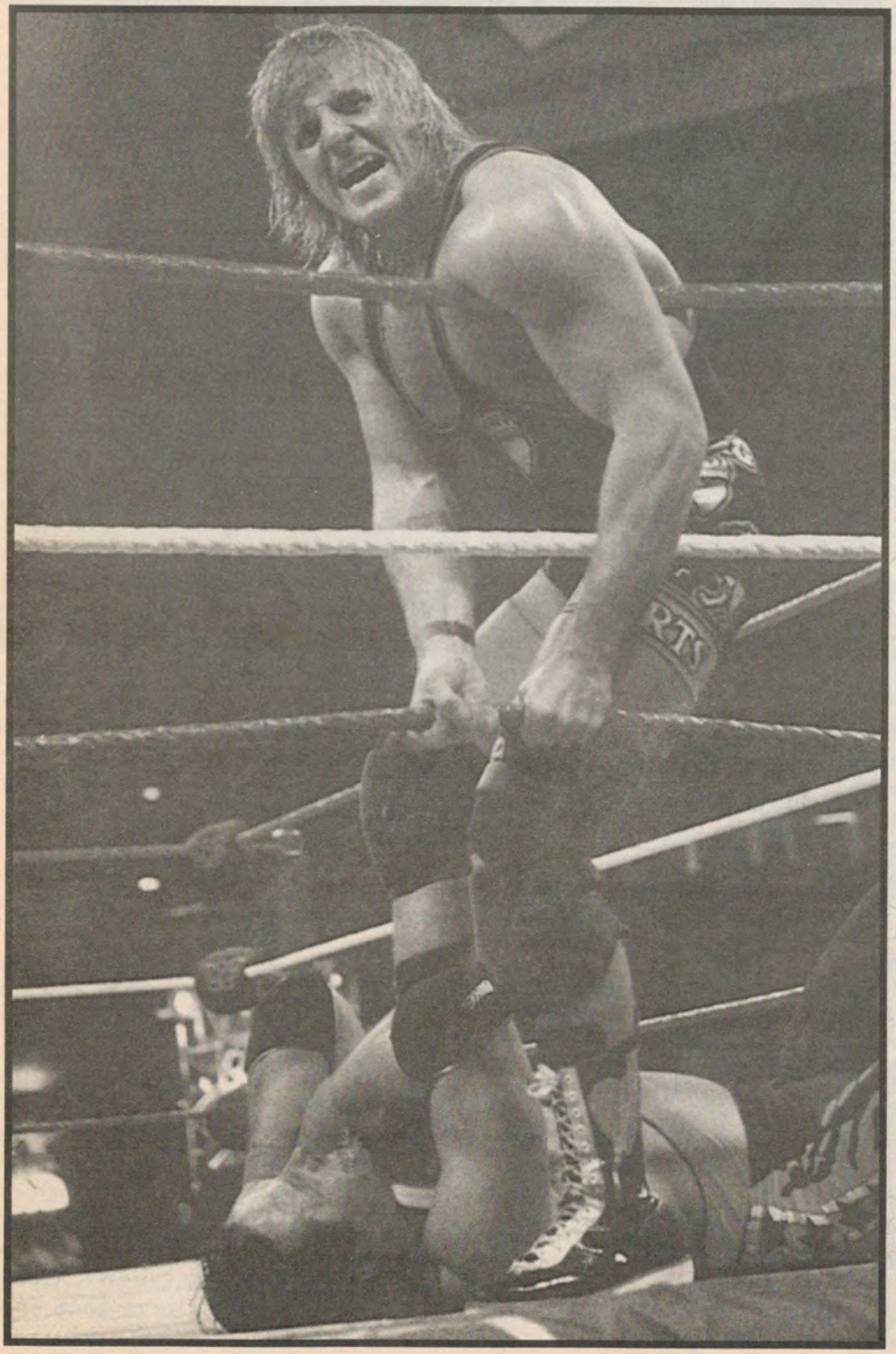
JACK: Plain and simple, chump: Cornette's going down. And so is anyone associated with him. Everyone wants a piece of us. Bring 'em all on. We'll fight them to the death.

EMELETT: Any plans to move on to, say, the WWF or WCW, and take on some of the teams there?

SAED: We told you before: Jack and me hate everybody, and we could beat everybody. We'll move on when we're good and ready. This interview's over! □

Helen Hart's Impassioned Plea To Bret:

"LET OWEN BEAT YOU!"



By Dave Rosenbaum

EVERY NIGHT, BEFORE she turns out the lights and goes to sleep, Helen Hart says a little prayer. It never changes. And each morning, when she wakes up, she prays that the day ahead will bring relief to the pain that has tormented her and the Hart family for more than a year.

"I pray for Bret and Owen," Helen revealed. "I pray that they'll make up with each other and that we'll be a real family again. That's what I hope for the most. But it breaks my heart. Each day it seems like things are getting worse and worse. Instead of getting closer, they're getting further apart.

Just when you think the Bret-Owen feud is on the verge of ending, it heats up again. Their mother thinks she has a most unusual way to put a stop to their wars

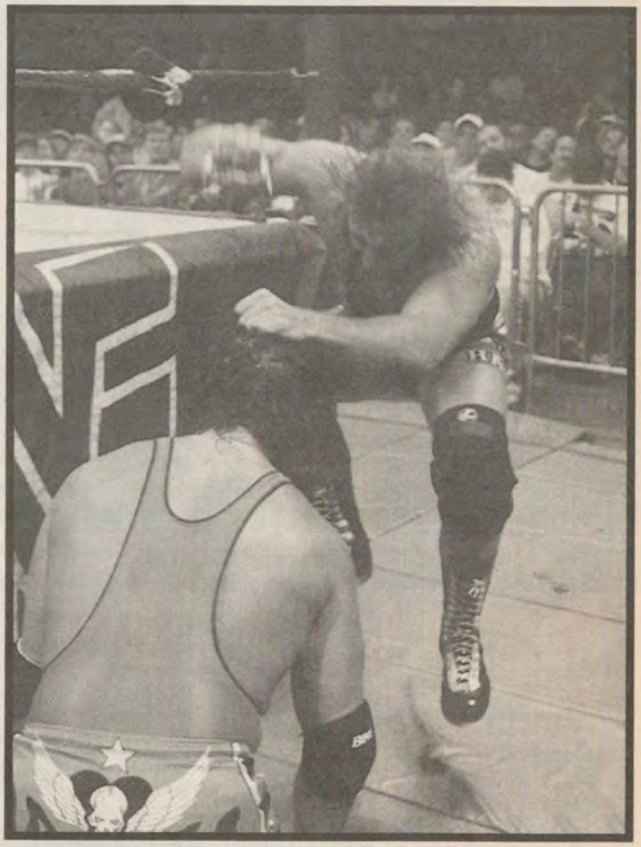
"Now I'm beginning to think there's only one way to settle this, and that's for Bret to just lie down and let Owen have his way. The family has been through too much. Owen and Bret have been through too much. Is it worth it to win a match if it means losing your family?

"Maybe Bret can see the sense in what I'm saying. I hope so, because I'm begging him. Bret, let Owen beat you. Let this thing just die."

Sadly, this sad mother knows it won't.

There are good days, when she is hopeful, and bad days, when all hope seems lost. The worst day of all was January 22, 1995, when the rift between Owen and Bret turned into a deep, dark chasm.

"The Royal Rumble was just a disaster," Stu Hart recalled. "I thought all along that Owen was the instigator in all this and Bret wanted no part of it—that he fought back because he had to. But at the Royal Rumble, for the first time, we saw Bret go after Owen the way he might have gone after his worst enemy. When Bret attacked Owen during the Royal Rumble, I knew things were far worse than I had anticipated. But I wouldn't tell Helen that."



After all these months, Owen Hart still thinks he can destroy his brother Bret. He has inflicted some damage in their recent no-holds-barred matches, but Bret keeps beating him in match after match.

Helen Hart bowed her head. A tear dripped off her chin and stained her blouse.

"I already know," she said. "Lord, I already know."

This is a feud with no winners, only losers. Several times since the 1993 Survivor Series, when the battle began, Helen and Stu were tricked into thinking the worst was over and a reconciliation was possible. Unfortunately, Owen's victory in the 1994 King of the Ring tournament only fueled

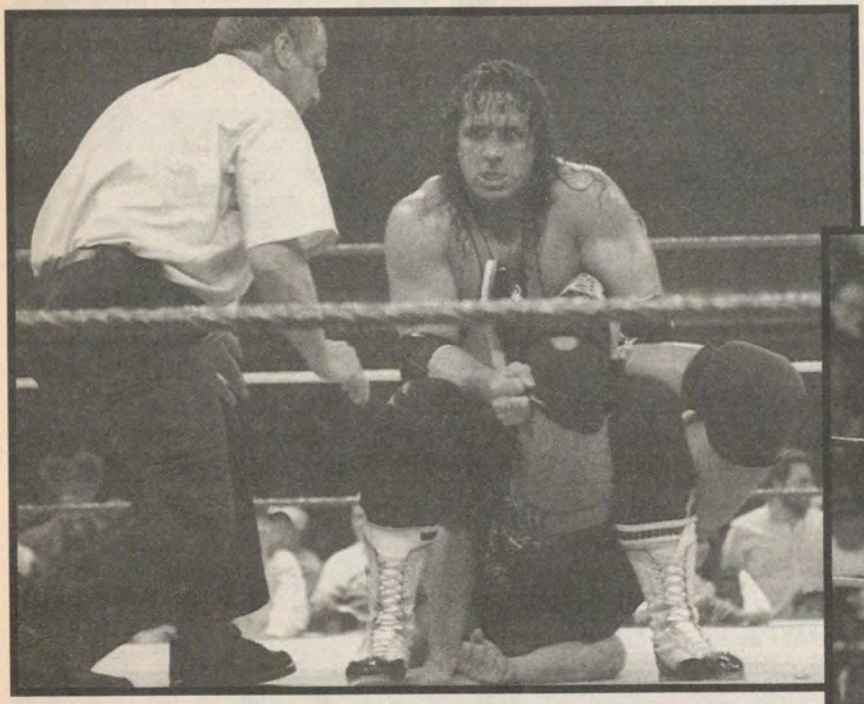
his thirst for beating Bret, and Bret's countless victories over Owen in defense of the WWF World title were blanks fired by a hesitantly pointed gun.

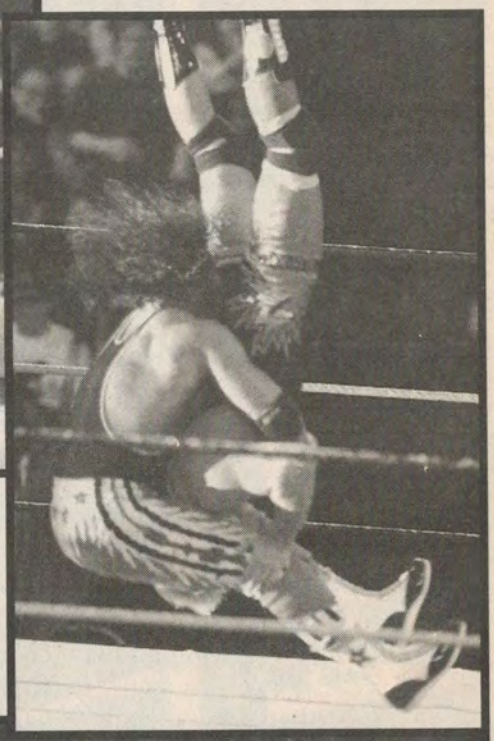
And when Bret lost the belt to Bob Backlund at the 1994 Survivor Series, Owen gloated, "You're a loser, Bret, just like me ... a loser!"

"I never thought of either of my sons as losers," Stu said, sadly remembering that night when his wife threw in the towel to end Bret's second WWF World title reign. "I couldn't believe what Owen was saying."

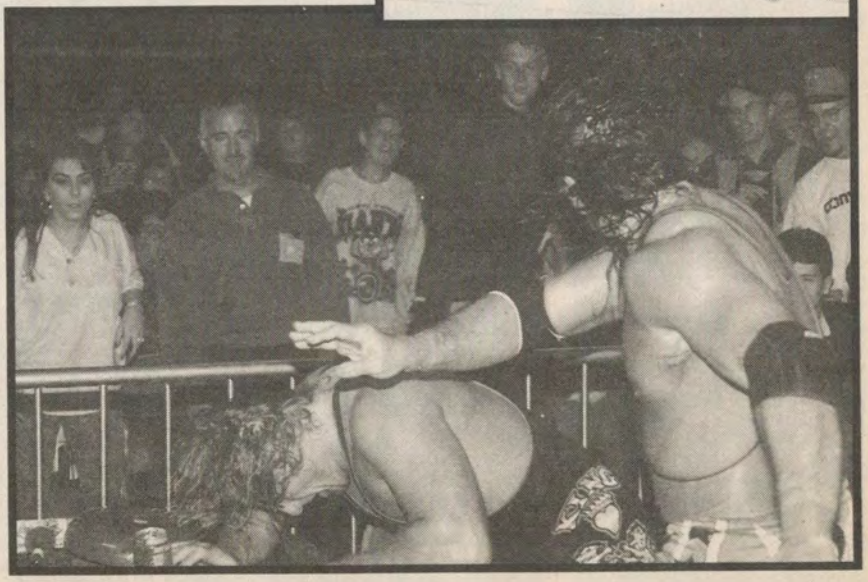
The 1995 Royal Rumble was particularly horrific for the Harts. First, Owen interfered in Bret's match against WWF World champion Diesel. The match was de-

Note how angry and determined Bret looks as he finishes off Owen with a "sharpshooter." No matter how much pain he inflicts on his brother, Owen keeps coming back for more.





It isn't like Bret to use vicious piledrivers (right) or attack an opponent outside the ring (below). Desperate times call for desperate measures, as the old saying goes. Maybe the only way for Bret to end this long, bitter feud *is* to let Owen beat him!



clared a draw because of excessive interference. Bret took out his anger by attacking Owen as he made his way to the ring for the Rumble. After Owen was eliminated, Bret attacked him again.

Since then, Bret and Owen have battled in a series of no-holds-barred matches, and Bret has been faithful to the spirit of the bouts. He has ruthlessly battered Owen and won most of the matches with his "sharpshooter" leglock. It usually takes a dozen referees and officials to pry him off Owen.

"I see what Bret is trying to do, and it pains me," Stu said. "He's trying to stop Owen by hurting him so badly that Owen can't wrestle anymore. It's terrible that a brother would try to do that to another brother, but I don't see what choice he has. Owen still refuses to stop going after Bret."

Helen sees another choice.

"He can just lose," she said. "There's no more reason for him to win. What does it get him? I know my sons. Owen's a very stubborn person. He's going to keep on fighting until he finally beats Bret. He knows he can do it, because he beat him at WrestleMania X. Bret already has his two World championships. He's already beaten Owen. If he loses to Owen a few more times, maybe this whole thing will end and we can live our lives in peace."

Of course, Helen knows Bret would never intentionally lose a match, even if it means possibly keeping his family together. And Stu Hart would never advise his son to lose on purpose.

"They're grown men who are going to have to deal with this in their own way," Stu said. "I don't see how Bret losing would solve anything, except to make Owen shoot off his mouth even more. Will the feud ever end? Sure, it will end, but I don't know what it's going to take to stop it. I think both boys, Owen and Bret, are going to have to see the error of their ways and realize what this has done to their mother."

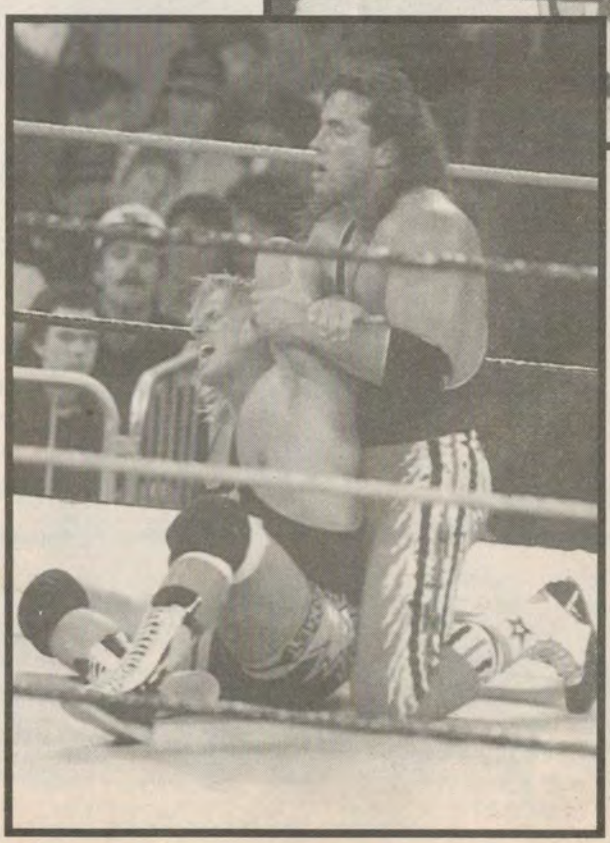
And their father?

"And their father," he added. "But I understand this better than she does. I've wrestled."

Helen Hart wrestles with her prayers.

"I'm doing my best to try to understand this," she said. "I talk to Bret and Owen all the time, but they won't let me say anything about what's going on.

"If only they saw me crying." □



Being the professional that he is, Bret would like to be able to just beat Owen fairly with elbowsmashes (above) and armbars (left). He is a better technical wrestler than his brother and would never lose on purpose ... would he?

Violence Without Reservations:

PUBLIC ENEMY– YOUR TABLE

IS WAITING!

Photos by Jason Ross Lavin

When a winner-must-smash-his-opponents-through-a-table match is on the menu, the hosts can only be ECW, and the results can only be less-than-appealing!

By Dave Rosenbaum

THE SOUP DU JOUR was blood, and the entree was violence. Rather than cook with his own specially designed sources, the chef used an unhealthy mix of tables and chairs to present a four-course Table H'ote that took a strong stomach to digest. When the banquet of violence had ended, Public Enemy walked up to the coat check girl and found out their belts had already been claimed.

But that's what happens when Johnny Grunge, Rocco Rock, Sabu, and Tasmaniac show up in the same restaurant. A four-star cafe turns into a cafeteria of carnage.

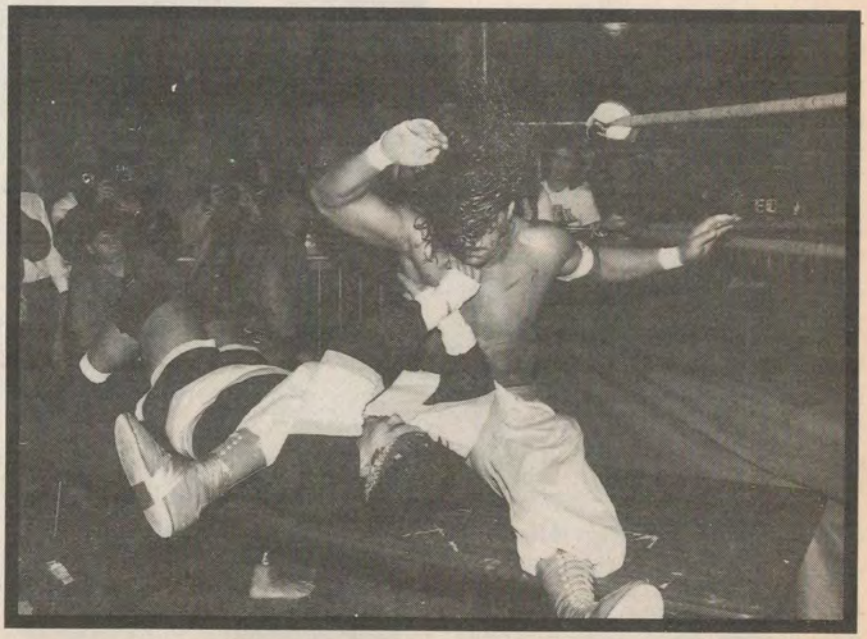
Table for four ... inside the wrestling ring.

Hey, what did you expect from Extreme Championship Wrestling, tablecloths?

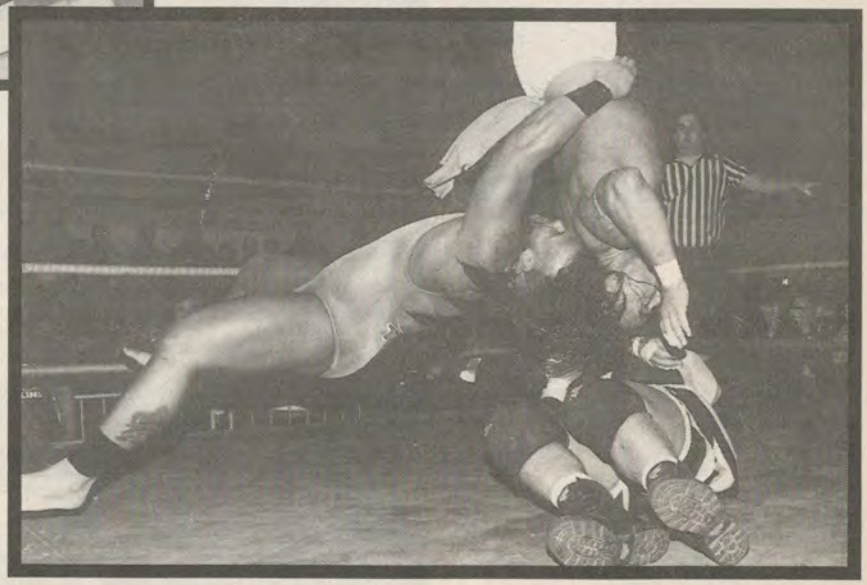
Public Enemy knew exactly what to expect when they stepped into the ring to defend their tag team belts against Sabu and Tasmaniac in one of the wildest matches ever: The stipulation was that both members of a team had to be put through a table for the match to end. And we don't mean onto the table, like when Sabu moonsaults onto an opponent who is lying on the timekeeper's table. We mean *though* the table.

"I'm surprised they didn't use one of those metal folding tables," joked Cactus Jack, who wrestled

What's going on here? You don't often see wrestlers like Tasmaniac and Johnny Grunge smashing each other through tables. But that was the only way to win this ultra-violent tag team title match.



All it took for Sabu to clinch the victory for the ECW tag team belts was a legdrop onto Rocco Rock, who just happened to be lying on a table outside the ring. Just another run-of-the-mill ECW table match!



It wasn't just Sabu who showed a thirst for extreme violence in the match. Tasmaniac's power bomb of Rock (above) was one thing, but he truly hurt Rocco when he suplexed Sabu—his partner!—onto him (right).

Sabu was the key to a victory that would never have occurred had referee John Finnegan not been knocked out during the match. That happened after Tasmaniac and Grunge fell backward and crashed through the table, supposedly reducing the match to a one-on-one between Sabu and Rocco Rock. That wasn't on the menu or in Johnny Grunge's plans. Grunge threw Sabu just where he wanted him, and sent Sabu through another table. The match should have been over, but there was one problem:

The maitre d' wasn't watching. The referee, that is, was dealing with another patron.

"I want to know what he was looking at," Grunge said. "Homey didn't know what the hell was going on, and then he turns his back at the wrong time. Maybe he thinks he made an honest mistake, but that doesn't go down where we come from. That referee cost us our livelihood."

"Didn't that idiot notice that another table was broken?" Rock wondered aloud.

on the card. "That would have been real ECW style. That's what I would have wanted!"

Maybe next time. This time, ECW didn't push things quite that far, although nowhere in wrestling history is there evidence of other table matches.

This was a house specialty, and when it comes to violence, there's really nobody who relishes it more than Sabu and Tasmaniac. They won the ECW tag team belts the hard way: by tabling any discussion about whether Public Enemy was tough enough to keep the title.

"They're nothing," Sabu said through his interpreter after the victory. "This was supposed to be their element—pure violence, but they weren't good enough. That's all it comes down to. They weren't good enough or tough enough."

a heaping portion of powder at Tasmaniac's eyes, then joined his partner in a two-tiered attack on Sabu.

Think of it as a food fight without food. Violence is officially sanctioned and encouraged in ECW, and nothing as pedestrian as rules will ever stop anyone. Belts are meaningful, but pride is sacred, and the law of this jungle is that it's either eat or be eaten.

Rocco Rock chose to eat. He dove off the top rope, caught

Obviously, he didn't. Nor did referee Finnegan seem to notice that Paul E. Dangerously and 911 suddenly got involved on Sabu's behalf. At that point, Rock was in a mismatch. His eyes were bigger than his stomach, and neither had a taste for the violence ahead. Sabu knocked Rocco through a table that was on the arena floor, setting the stage for dessert.

More violence.

Chris Benoit, who months earlier had done a number on Sabu's

neck, joined the fray and powerbombed Sabu and Rocco Rock through another table. Rock was carried back to the dressing room on a stretcher, and Sabu was left lying in a pool of his own blood. Benoit seemed none the worse for wear and rather pleased with himself for providing the highlight of the evening.

"They probably thought it couldn't get any rougher out there," Benoit said. "They were wrong."

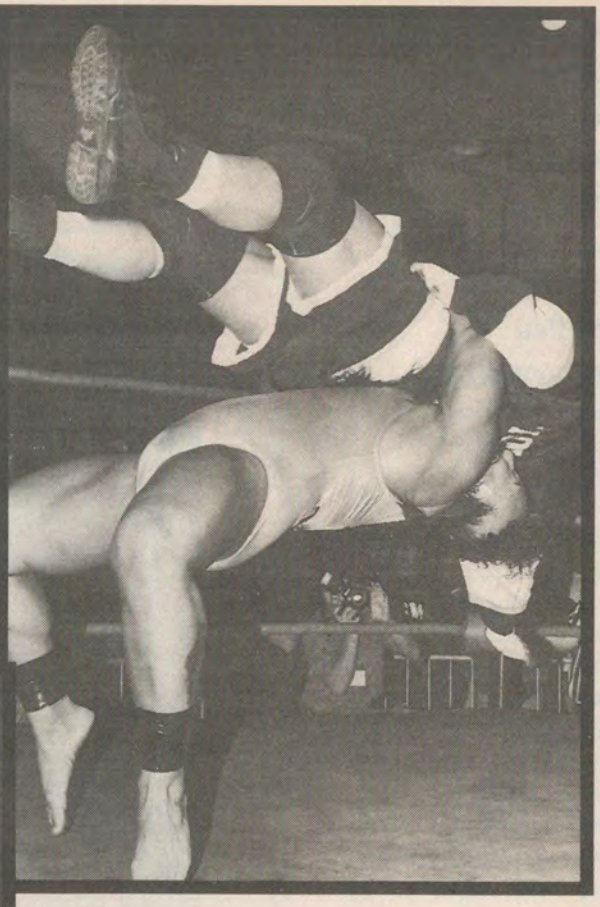
He cackled. Paul E. Dangerously spat.

"Benoit had no business getting involved," said Dangerously, the pot calling the kettle black. "This was an important match, and Benoit affected the outcome. At least we won!"

Sorry, Paul E., but the match was already over when Benoit interfered. You're the one who couldn't keep his hand out of the cookie jar.

Then again, assigning blame in a"loser-must-be-smashed-through-a-table" match seems kind of ridiculous, like sending back the bouillabaisse because it's too cold.

This is ECW. The wrestlers were violent. That's just how it's supposed to be. □



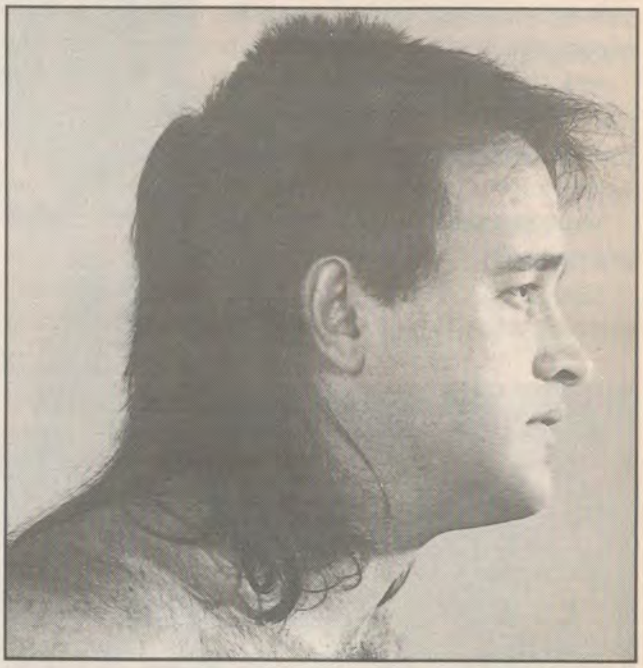
In between all the table smashing, Tasmaniac thought it best to try to soften up Rock with one of his favorite moves: the belly-to-back suplex. It was strange seeing some actual wrestling moves in the middle of this carnage.

A normal man might not have gotten up for a while after being choked with part of a metal walker. Sabu is no normal man. This heinous act only made him want to destroy Public Enemy more.

The blood was flowing freely after Sabu legdropped Grunge ... and smashed a metal chair onto his head in the process. Public Enemy actually complained that they were robbed of the ECW tag team belts in this match!

The telephone wires sizzle each month, as two top wrestlers voice their rage and hostility toward each other. Here's the unedited transcript of their conversation, your chance to feel the raw emotion that results when two antagonists face off ... One On One

ONE O



"Cornette is a snake. Always has been, always will be ... I think it's just a matter of time before he spews some of that poisonous venom our way!"
—Robert Gibson

EVEN THEIR DETRACTORS would agree that Rick Morton and Robert Gibson—The Rock 'n' Roll Express—are one of the greatest tag teams in the sport's history. Winners of four NWA World tag team championships and a slew of regional championships, Morton and Gibson have proved themselves a team of substance as well as style.

One of the things that defined the Rock 'n' Rolls was their hatred for manager Jim Cornette. For more than a decade, Morton and Gibson furiously battled Cornette-led duos like The Midnight Express and The Heavenly Bodies. They never disguised their hatred for Cornette. Which is why it came as such a shock when the Rock 'n' Rolls announced late last year that Cornette would be "advising" them for a series of matches against The Gangstas, who held the Smoky Mountain tag team belts at the time. The alliance didn't seem to make any sense, but for Morton and Gibson, it worked. With Cornette's guidance, they won the belts from The Gangstas on Christmas night.

Old feuds die hard, however, and there is dissension in the ranks of the Rock 'n' Rolls. While Morton wants to keep Cornette in the Rock 'n' Rolls' corner permanently, Gibson is beginning to have serious doubts about the partnership.

So far, the disagreement does not appear to be threatening the long-term stability of the team, but both men are concerned that if they don't deal with their differences soon, The Rock 'n' Roll Express will be in major trouble.

Morton and Gibson allowed us to listen in on a very important telephone conversation. Let's see if they can work out their problems ... "One On One."

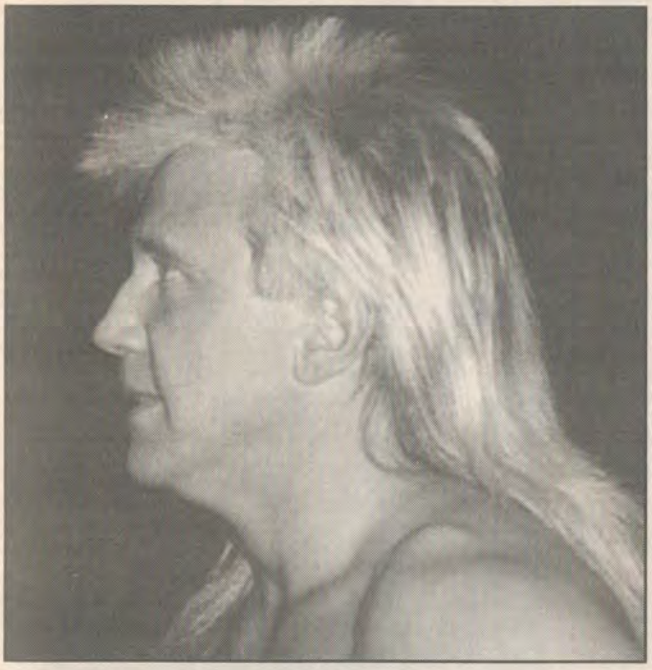
RICK MORTON: Bobby, look, I know you're concerned about Cornette. Can't blame you one bit. I can't ignore what went down in the past, either, brother. But I think it's time you give the man a chance. Hey, I don't think we'd have the Smoky Mountain belts today if it weren't for him.

ROBERT GIBSON: I never said Cornette isn't a good manager. He's good—real good. I just think that maybe we've gone as far with him as we should. Every day we stay with him, we're tempting fate. Cornette is a snake. Always has been, always will be. Nothing can change that. I think it's just a matter of time before he spews some of that venom our way!

RM: Hey, brother, haven't The Rock 'n' Roll Express always been about forgiveness? Haven't we always been for giving a man a second chance? Even after every rotten thing that's happened, I still think we should give that man a chance. Just like you gave me that chance, Robert. When I went bad, you never stopped believing in me. You knocked some sense into my head, and I got back on track. Give Cornette that same chance.

RG: Ricky, you can't compare yourself to Cornette, man. Sure, you had your rough times, but there was never any doubt you were a good, decent person in your heart. You just

N ONE



"We're not young anymore. If we want to stick around and compete on a high level, there have to be some changes. Cornette is one of those changes!"
—Rick Morton

had a temporary problem. Cornette, though ... he's different. He may be doing right by us now, but he's still pretty rotten. He hasn't changed his tune at all. He still cheats and interferes and manages some pretty bad people. He's still hooked up with The Heavenly Bodies, and you know they're no angels. Remember all those times they beat us up and left us bloody? Remember all those times when Cornette tried to beat us senseless with that stupid tennis racket of his?

RM: Brother, I hate to say this, but sometimes I think you're a little naive about this business. I know we always have to try to do the right thing, but the bottom line is we're here to win matches. If we weren't, we'd have no right to call ourselves professional athletes. Now Jim Cornette, love him or hate him, knows how to win. We might not always like the way he does things, but he does get results. He got them for us.

RG: I can't believe you're talking like that, brother. I always thought we believed that playing by the rules and losing was better than breaking the rules and winning. You say we're successes with Cornette, but don't forget how well we did without him! We were champions of the world ... four times over! And we did it our way, by playing it fair all the way down the line. I'm not saying we've been perfect—far from it. I am saying that the Rock 'n' Rolls have always stood for something good. I don't want to see anything happen to change that.

RM: I see your point, man, but times are changing. This sport gets rougher every day. It's getting hard for teams to survive. Brother, face it: We're not young anymore. If we want to stick around and compete on a high level, there have to be some changes. Cornette is one of those changes. He's the man who could lead us into the 21st century if we let him.

RG: Then why do I have this rotten feeling in my gut? Why do I feel like he's the man who's going to lead us to disaster? I might be way off-base, but I think Cornette is setting us up for a fall. He'll act like our friend. Maybe for a while, things really will go smooth. Then all of a sudden—*bam!*—he'll lower the boom on us.

RM: Stop being such a downer, Bobby!

RG: Don't tell me you can't see this coming, Rick! We'll be in the middle of a match against The Gangstas or the Bodies, and Cornette'll pass one of them a foreign object, or throw them his tennis racket. We lose, and Cornette announces to the world how smart he is and how he just put one over on those idiots Morton and Gibson. Cornette's been doing that kind of thing his whole career. We just might be next, and if we are, imagine how stupid we'll look. And you call *me* naive?

RM: Robert, all you're doing is dreaming, man. Having nightmares. So far Jim hasn't given us any reason to think like that. Look, neither of us are dumb. I think we'd wise up to Cornette long before he'd ever get the chance to double-cross us again. So stop worrying about what might be, and start thinking about what actually is. We are the Smoky Mountain tag team champions! Think about that, and remember who helped us get there.

RG: Brother, I hope you're right. If Cornette really has turned it around, there won't be anybody happier than me. But let's play it safe. Let's tell Cornette it's been a great ride, but now it's time for him to get off. The Rock 'n' Roll Express is back. We don't need the risk.

RM: Can't do it, brother. I say we stick with him.

RG: I was afraid of that. □

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Sincerely Yours

(Continued from page 5)

Superstardom"), I couldn't wait to see him in action. His match was the most exciting on an independent card I recently attended, and I am now proud to say that I am an Al Snow fan.

The story of his career is a good example of how patience and perseverance pay off in the long run. He paid his dues when trying to break into the sport and during his early professional years. He isn't flashy like most wrestlers today; he's a wrestler who doesn't need a glitzy costume to be noticed. He has the talent and the ability to be a major star.

Al Snow gets my vote as 1995's Inspirational Wrestler of the Year!

JULIA KING
St. Paul, MN

WEIGHING AN ISSUE

Johnny B. Badd shouldn't have to lose weight to win a belt ("Johnny B. Badd Can't Weight: Bring On The New Division," April 1995.) He has already proven that he can win championships in the heavyweight division, so why should he concern himself with the cruiserweight division if it is resurrected?

Badd faces all competitors, and he usually comes out on top. Whether or not he gains a few pounds doesn't really matter if he is healthy and in top shape. As long as he eats healthy and feels good, then he should not be ashamed if he puts on a few pounds. It's only natural to gain weight as you get older.

Too many people are concerned with their weight today. If he did weigh more, he would still be able to execute his high-flying moves. If you don't believe me, just watch Big Van Vader execute a moonsault.

SEAN ULLOTH
Macon, GA

WRITE HIM OFF!

I think it's time that Irwin R. Schyster retired. Maybe he could become a full-time tax accountant or something. The guy has seen better days. All he does now is start feuds he has no chance of winning. First, he started one with Razor Ramon, when the "Bad Guy" was Intercontinental champ. He got a lot of shots at the I-C belt, but never won it. More recently, he has targeted The Undertaker. He has been destroyed in a lot of those matches. Schyster should start feuding with Steve Lombardi or Reno Riggins—two guys he could handle.

Irwin R. Schyster has been thrashed in feuds with Razor Ramon and The Undertaker. Reader Paul Geist suggests he set his sights on much weaker competition.

PAUL GEIST
Salisbury, MD ☐

Behind The Door

(Continued from page 12)

had to make sure Patrick made the wrong call.

Which he did.

The match was more than 16 minutes old when Brian Knobs of the Nastys executed a double-clothesline on Booker T and Stevie Ray. Knobs covered Ray, but Booker T broke up the pin. Then Jerry Sags joined the fray; a four-way brawl ensued. While Knobs and Ray—the legal men—battled, Sags threw Booker T over the top rope and down to the arena floor.

The match continued, as it should have. The legal men were still in the ring. Sherri Martel climbed to the top rope, spiked high heel in hand, and prepared to nail Knobs. She missed and nailed Ray. Now Ray was flat on his back, and Knobs covered him for the pin and, supposedly, the belts.

Wrong. Randy Anderson charged into the ring and explained to Patrick what he missed. Patrick listened, thought for a split-second, and took the belts away from Sags and Knobs. The decision was reversed.

Get this: The Nasty Boys were disqualified for an over-the-top-rope violation. The violation: Illegal man Sags threw illegal man Booker T over the top rope.

Could somebody please explain this to me like I'm a four-year-old? Since when does the over-the-top-rope rule apply to the men who aren't legal at the time?

"I never heard of that one before," Sting said. "It's a new one on me. If somebody wants to show that to me in the rulebook, I'd love to see it, because I want to know."

Sherri Martel and Stevie Ray get away with double-teaming Jerry Sags outside the ring at SuperBrawl V. Referee Nick Patrick didn't see this or many of the other infractions at the pay-per-view

Don't worry, Sting, there's nothing to know. The only important thing is that Anderson and Patrick went out of their way to mess up a completely legal finish. A loss by Harlem Heat would have been well-deserved after Sherri's interference.

Of course, Sags and Knobs were inconsolable.

"How could they do that to us?" Knobs said. "I didn't throw anybody over the top rope. Sags did, but he wasn't the legal man in the ring. I was. I don't believe this. Now they're making up rules to stop us."

Sags never dreamed his toss would cost his team the title.

"I was clearing the ring," Sags said. "Getting rid of the garbage."

I was amazed when Anderson defended his decision.

"The over-the-top-rope rule has nothing to do with who's legal and who's not," Anderson explained. "It's a safety rule, the thinking being that it's very dangerous to throw a person over the top rope and down to the floor. We're trying to prevent that type of wanton violence. It doesn't matter who's legal and who's not. It's all a matter of retaining order."

Patrick said he didn't realize until afterward that Anderson was telling him about the illegal men in the ring.

"But I realized he was right," Patrick said. "I asked Commissioner Bockwinkel if he thought we did the right thing, and he agreed that we did."

Well, if that was the right thing, then the wrestlers need an explanation. Nobody, including veteran reporter Matt Brock, had ever seen the rule enforced in that manner.

Maybe the refs just had a bad night and didn't want to admit it. □

On The Road

(Continued from page 10)

again. For instance:

•Like so many wrestlers, Taylor has been suspended for drug use. Midway through his career, he surrendered to the demons that were taking control of his life and entered a rehabilitation program. He returned to star for many years in his sport, much the same way Kerry Von Erich did. Okay, maybe that's not the best example.

•Like many wrestlers, Taylor has come out of retirement. He announced that 1992 would be his last year in football, but his team played poorly and Taylor's season was cut short by an Achilles tendon injury. He didn't like the way he left the sport, so he returned for one more season. Ric Flair is apparently in the process of negotiating a similar return after losing the last few matches of his career, all of them title bouts ... well, maybe that's not a good comparison, either.

Bam Bam Bigelow is struggling to rise above mid-card status in the WWF right now. That still puts him way above Taylor in terms of wrestling experience and ability.

•Like many wrestlers, Taylor has jumped federations. He spent 1994 as a halftime analyst for NFL telecasts on TNT, a network owned by WCW honcho Ted Turner. His first match will be in the WWF, which is owned by McMahon. Plenty of wrestlers have had tremendous success after jumping from WCW to the WWF, such as Rick and Scott Steiner, and Sid Justice, and .... okay, skip that one, too.

•Like many wrestlers, Taylor may be using the sport as a means to an end. "There's always a method to Lawrence's madness," former teammate Harry Carson recently told the *New York Daily News*. "He's shrewd. He must be setting himself for something bigger down the road. Maybe he's using this to enhance a possible movie career." If that is Taylor's plan, he would be doing something that has come natural to guys like Hulk Hogan and .... well, of course, Hogan and .... well, maybe we should also forget that comparison.

The train has slowed to a crawl as it pulls into Penn Station. I still have two things I am trying to figure out. The second thing I'm trying to figure out may come to me during a cab ride to Brooklyn. But before I head for the taxi stand, I stop at the Amtrak information booth, which may help me with the first thing I'm trying to figure out. My question brings a two-word response:

Brake fluid. □

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P P C W
Pro Wrestling with an Edge

The Insider

(Continued from page 14)

South Coliseum in Memphis. Who was that big fella sporting a USWA title belt? Former legend-in-the-making Sid Vicious. Vicious looked tentative while splitting the first two falls with Brian Christopher, and I wondered what we all had been thinking when we touted the youngster as the next coming of Bruiser Brody.

Then Vicious took a straight right from Christopher flush on the nose. Sid smiled. Then he flexed his mouth into a growl. Christopher, who had been controlling the match, shrunk. Thirty seconds and Vicious had turned Christopher into mashed yams, leaving him limp and lumpy on the ring floor.

I switched to a Pro Wrestling America card from Wisconsin. Jim Brunzell—I often wondered what had happened to him—was pinning Randy Gusto. *This isn't such a bad way to live,* I was thinking, when the phone rang. "We have to meet Cornette for dinner," Hunter said. "He says he thinks the Steelers might be pulling out. He's desperate."

We met in the lobby. I smelled something funny. "What's that you're wearing?" I asked Hunter. "And why?"

"A new perfume."

Dinner was a chore, with Cornette crying into his food the whole night. On the bar TV, a tape of Big Van Vader crushing Hacksaw Duggan played. Later that night, Liz and I caught WCW live at the Civic Arena and had a great time watching Sting try to make sense of Avalanche. The referee, obviously paid off, gave the match to Sting by disqualification after Avalanche accidentally pushed him over the top rope.

Have mercy, Vader. Haven't you bruised and bloodied the face of Hacksaw Duggan enough? He's too stupid to know when to quit. Stop, big man, before you kill this poor, pathetic patriot!

Meanwhile, Hunter's perfume induced a terrible allergic reaction. My eyes swelled nearly shut. I looked worse than Duggan after Vader knocked him senseless. At the press conference in the dressing room, I tried asking Sting a question, but the words didn't come out right. Sting said something tasteless, and everyone laughed. I fled the room and returned to my hotel.

The next day, Cornette said he got the bad news officially. He and Mom won't own a pro football franchise, at least not the Pittsburgh Steelers.

"Maybe I'll try baseball," he said. "I hear the Tigers are up for sale. Could I ride with you guys to Detroit?"

Hunter and I packed and left that night, while Cornette attended another business meeting. We spilled over the state line into Ohio, and took in a card at some local high school. Good, classic small-town wrestling. I left feeling great. The swelling in my eyes had subsided. As I had requested, Hunter had showered the perfume off. I put on some meditation music they play in loony bins for patients predisposed to psychotic episodes.

"That's nice stuff," she said. "I really like it."

Huh? So we didn't hit it off right away, but maybe there's hope. Maybe this trip won't be the extended nightmare I thought it would be. I'll have to call Stu Saks in the morning and tell him he wasn't crazy after all. □

On Assignment

(Continued from page 16)

Jim Cornette was feeling pretty good about himself when he drove with Liz and Eddie to Pittsburgh, where he (supposedly!) met with members of the Steelers organization. He wasn't so jolly after the meeting ended.

Cornette was inconsolable, but you should have seen Ellner. On the ride from New York, Cornette had asked him if he'd join the Steelers organization as his director of marketing. I'd never seen Ellner so excited. And the questions—"What kind of office would I have?" ... "Do I get my own secretary?" ... "Is there a gym in the building?" ... you get the idea—were pathetic reminders of how shallow his priorities truly are. Now Ellner was accusing Cornette of fabricating the whole meeting just to score a free ride to Pittsburgh.

"I could fly my own plane wherever I want, you little freak," Cornette exclaimed. "I came to give you the pleasure of my company."

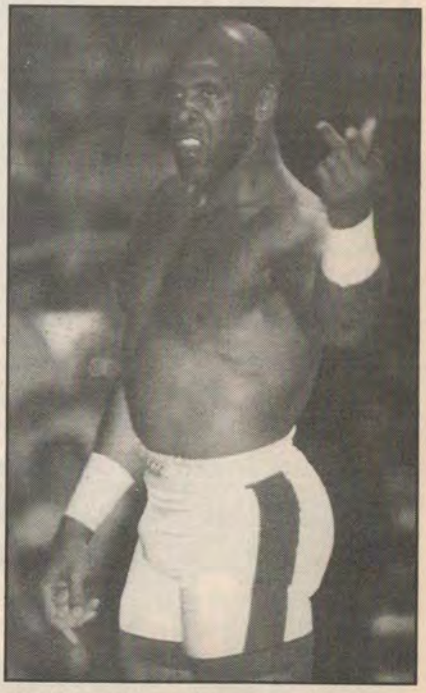
We spent the rest of the meal picking at our food in silence. It was very depressing. Cornette started wailing at dessert. It was time to leave.

That night, Ellner and I drove into Ohio to take in an independent card at a high school. It provided just the right tonic. We screamed when Virgil, trying to pick up the remains of a once-promising career, flung Ron Cumberledge out of the ring with a flick of his powerful wrist. We bet a soda on the outcome of the Brett Powers-"Outlaw" Johnny Walker U.S. light heavyweight title match. I lost when Walker pinned Powers in a closely fought match. Ellner even smiled when Doink the Clown pinched his cheek before pinning Big Bully Busick.

"Look, Liz," he said as we got back into the car. "As long as we concentrate on wrestling, we'll be fine. This could be interesting. Keep the talking down, no more cigarettes, and try to like the music instead of fighting it. And learn to breathe. If you find yourself getting upset, or having to go to the bathroom, just breathe through it."

He slipped in a tape. "This is Singh Kaur singing 'Guru Ram Das.' It will relax you," he assured. "Trust me." He handed me a book: *Bladder Control*, by Dr. Eves Horowitz. "And read this for God's sake," he said. "We can't be stopping every five minutes."

I held my breath. I hated the music, which sounded like what they'd play at the gates of heaven when you're dead. I made a mental note to ask Stu Saks for combat pay. It was going to be a long trip. A very long trip. □



Virgil may have disappeared from the WWF, but he is now a major star on the independent circuit, as Liz Hunter recently found out.

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INSIDE WRESTLING'S
OFFICIAL RATINGS

TOP 15

1—HULK HOGAN
(8) WCW World champion

2—DIESEL
(1) WWF World champion

3—BIG VAN VADER
(3) U.S. heavyweight champion

4—SHAWN MICHAELS
(15) No. 2 contender: WWF World title

5—JERRY LAWLER
(11) USWA heavyweight champion

6—JEFF JARRETT
(4) WWF Intercontinental champion

7—BRET HART
(9) No. 3 contender: WWF World title

8—ARN ANDERSON
(–) WCW TV champion

9—RAZOR RAMON
(5) No. 4 contender: WWF World title

10—KING KONG BUNDY
(14) No. 5 contender: WWF World title

11—STING
(2) No. 5 contender: WCW World title

12—DAVEY BOY SMITH
(6) No. 7 contender: WWF World title

13—RANDY SAVAGE
(7) No. 7 contender: WCW World title

14—LEX LUGER
(–) No. 8 contender: WWF World title

15—SHANE DOUGLAS
(–) ECW heavyweight champion

WCW

1—HULK HOGAN
(1) 275, Venice Beach, CA

2—BIG VAN VADER
(2) 450, Denver, CO

3—ARN ANDERSON
(5) 249, Minneapolis, MN

4—JOHNNY B. BADD
(4) 235, Macon, GA

5—BLACKTOP BULLY
(–) 264, Dubuque, IA

6—STING
(3) 260, Venice Beach, CA

7—KEVIN SULLIVAN
(10) 252, Boston, MA

8—AVALANCHE
(6) 502, Montreal, Quebec

9—ALEX WRIGHT
(12) 222, Berlin, Germany

10—DUSTIN RHODES
(9) 254, Austin, TX

11—HACKSAW DUGGAN
(7) 280, Glens Falls, NY

12—RANDY SAVAGE
(8) 237, Sarasota, FL

13—BRUTUS BEEFCAKE
(11) 273, San Francisco, CA

14—BUBBA ROGERS
(14) 310, Cobb County, GA

15—PAUL ROMA
(–) 235, Kensington, KY

WWF

1—DIESEL
(1) 356, Las Vegas, NV

2—JEFF JARRETT
(2) 230, Nashville, TN

3—SHAWN MICHAELS
(6) 234, San Antonio, TX

4—BRET HART
(4) 234, Calgary, Alberta

5—RAZOR RAMON
(3) 287, Miami, FL

6—KING KONG BUNDY
(8) 446, Atlantic City, NJ

7—HAKUSHI
(15) 231, Tokyo, Japan

8—DAVEY BOY SMITH
(5) 245, Leeds, England

9—LEX LUGER
(9) 265, Chicago, IL

10—OWEN HART
(11) 227, Calgary, Alberta

11—BOB BACKLUND
(10) 234, Princeton, MN

12—MABEL
(14) 503, Harlem, NY

13—TATANKA
(12) 250, Pembroke, NC

14—THE UNDERTAKER
(7) 328, parts unknown

15—ADAM BOMB
(–) 292, Harrisburg, PA

MOST POPULAR

1—STING
Last issue: No. 1 Most Popular

2—HULK HOGAN
Last issue: No. 4 Most Popular

3—DIESEL
Last issue: No. 8 Most Popular

4—RAZOR RAMON
Last issue: No. 3 Most Popular

5—RANDY SAVAGE
Last issue: No. 2 Most Popular

6—BRET HART
Last issue: No. 6 Most Popular

7—DAVEY BOY SMITH
Last issue: No. 9 Most Popular

8—THE UNDERTAKER
Last issue: No. 5 Most Popular

9—LEX LUGER
Last issue: No. 7 Most Popular

10—HACKSAW DUGGAN
Last issue: No. 14 Most Popular

11—JOHNNY B. BADD
Last issue: No. 10 Most Popular

12—CACTUS JACK
Last issue: No. 11 Most Popular

13—DUSTIN RHODES
Last issue: No. 15 Most Popular

14—TONY ANTHONY
Last issue: No. 12 Most Popular

15—ADAM BOMB
Last issue: unrated

MOST HATED

1—BIG VAN VADER
Last issue: No. 1 Most Hated

2—SHAWN MICHAELS
Last issue: No. 3 Most Hated

3—OWEN HART
Last issue: No. 2 Most Hated

4—BOB BACKLUND
Last issue: No. 4 Most Hated

5—JERRY LAWLER
Last issue: No. 5 Most Hated

6—JEFF JARRETT
Last issue: No. 7 Most Hated

7—KING KONG BUNDY
Last issue: No. 6 Most Hated

8—TATANKA
Last issue: No. 9 Most Hated

9—IRWIN R. SCHYSTER
Last issue: No. 8 Most Hated

10—SID VICIOUS
Last issue: No. 12 Most Hated

11—BRUTUS BEEFCAKE
Last issue: No. 10 Most Hated

12—AVALANCHE
Last issue: No. 11 Most Hated

13—BUDDY LANDELL
Last issue: No. 13 Most Hated

14—SHANE DOUGLAS
Last issue: No. 14 Most Hated

15—DOUG GILBERT
Last issue: unrated

TOP 15

1—HARLEM HEAT
(3) WCW World tag team champions

2—THE SMOKIN' GUNNS
(1) WWF World tag team champions

3—THE NASTY BOYS
(2) No. 1 contenders: WCW World tag title

4—THE HEADSHRINKERS
(4) No. 1 contenders: WWF World tag title

5—ELI & JACOB BLU
(12) No. 2 contenders: WWF World tag title

6—MARCUS BAGWELL & THE PATRIOT
(7) No. 2 contenders: WCW World tag title

7—DOUG GILBERT & TOMMY RICH
(8) USWA tag team champions

8—BOB HOLLY & THE KID
(5) No. 3 contenders: WWF World tag title

9—RANDY SAVAGE & STING
(–) No. 3 contenders: WCW World tag title

10—SABU & TASMANIAC
(14) ECW tag team champions

11—THE HEAVENLY BODIES
(11) No. 4 contenders: WWF World tag title

12—PAUL ORNDORFF & PAUL ROMA
(15) No. 4 contenders: WCW World tag title

13—THE ROCK 'N' ROLL EXPRESS
(6) Smoky Mountain tag team champions

14—PG-13
(13) No. 1 contenders: USWA tag title

15—WELL DUNN
(–) No. 5 contenders: WWF World tag title

These ratings are compiled by the editors with the assistance of promoters, wrestlers, and reporters around the country, and are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and the inherent skill of each wrestler. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue... "Most Popular" and "Most Hated" ratings are based on nationwide surveys of wrestling fans and on mail that comes to our offices ... Championships highlighted in bold on the "Roll Call Of Champions" have changed hands since our previous issue ... The information under the championship listing indicates the date that champion won the title, who the former champion was, and where the match took place.

For period ended March 5, 1995

ROLL CALL OF CHAMPIONS

ALL-JAPAN ASIAN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: DAN KROFFAT & DOUG FURNAS
(September 9, 1993; from The Patriot & The Eagle; Omiya, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION: STAN HANSEN
(March 4, 1995; from Toshiaki Kawada; Tokyo, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: DAN KROFFAT
(July 12, 1994; from Masanobu Fuchi; Kagoshima, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: MITSUHARU MISAWA & KENTA KOBASHI
(December 10, 1994; beat Johnny Ace & Steve Williams in tournament final; Tokyo, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN UNITED NATIONAL CHAMPION: STAN HANSEN
(March 4, 1995; from Toshiaki Kawada; Tokyo, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S ALL-PACIFIC CHAMPION: MINAMI TOYOTA
(August 24, 1994; beat Yoko Inoue; Tokyo, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S CHAMPION: KAORU ITO
(May 4, 1994; beat Rie Tamada in tournament final; Toda, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION: AJA KONG
(November 26, 1992; from Bull Nakano; Kawasaki, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: CANDY OKUTSU
(December 6, 1993; from Chapparita Asari; Osaka, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:
MINAMI TOYOTA & TOSHIYO YAMADA
(December 6, 1993; from Dynamite Kansai & Mayumi Ozaki; Osaka, Japan)

ALL-STATE WRESTLING HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: TONY PRICHARD
(August 24, 1994; from Rick Cannon; Pigeon Forge, TN)

ALL-STATE WRESTLING TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: REGULATOR STEEL & REGULATOR STONE
(September 15, 1994; by forfeit, from Rick Conners & Lone Star; Maryville, TN)

AMERICAN COMMONWEALTH HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: T. RANTULA
(March 26, 1994; from Rip Sawyer; Johnsonburg, PA)

AMERICAN COMMONWEALTH LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: LORD ZOLTAN
(October 1, 1994; from Johnny Graham; Lewistown, PA)

AMERICAN COMMONWEALTH TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE BAD CREW
(September 30, 1993; title previously vacant; York, PA)

AMERICAN STATES WRESTLING HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: SCOTT SOMERS
(November 19, 1993; from Bo Dacious; Mansfield, OH)

ATLANTIC WRESTLING COUNCIL LIGHTWEIGHT CHAMPION: BOBBY ROGERS
(December 4, 1993; from Blare Rogers; Hollywood, FL)

ATLANTIC WRESTLING COUNCIL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: T.J. JACKSON & THE MISER
(July 2, 1993; from American Scorpion & The Falcon; West Palm Beach, FL)

CENTURY WRESTLING ALLIANCE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: TONY ATLAS
(December 4, 1993; from Vic Steamboat; Tewksbury, MA)

CONTINENTAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: VIC STEAMBOAT
(October 23, 1993; from The Iron Sheik; Wakefield, MA)

CONTINENTAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: RAY ODYSSEY
(October 23, 1993; from Flex Lavender; Wakefield, MA)

ECW HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: SHANE DOUGLAS
(March 26, 1994; from Terry Funk; Devon, PA)

ECW TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: CHRIS BENOIT & DEAN MALENKO
(February 25, 1995; from Sabu & Tasmaniac; Philadelphia, PA)

ECW TELEVISION CHAMPION: DEAN MALENKO
(November 4, 1994; from 2 Cold Scorpio; Hamburg, PA)

FLORIDA WRESTLING COUNCIL HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: BUTCH LONG
(January 6, 1995; from Navy Seal; Tampa, FL)

ICW HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: MIKE MAJORS
(December 31, 1994; beat Marc Ash; Wallace, NC)

ICW TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: MARC ASH & GEORGE SOUTH
(January 14, 1995; beat Mike Majors and Dark Star; Atkinson, NC)

IWC HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: KONNAN
(April 2, 1994; from Cien Caras; Reynosa, Mexico)

IWGP CHAMPION: SHINYA HASHIMOTO
(May 1, 1994; from Tatsumi Fujinami; Fukuoka, Japan)

IWGP INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: HIROSHI HASE & THE GREAT MUTA
(November 25, 1994; from Kensuke Sasaki & Hawk; Iwate, Japan)

IWGP JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: KOJI KANEMOTO
(February 19, 1995; from Norio Honaga; Tokyo, Japan)

MIDWEST TERRITORIAL WRESTLING HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: BRUISER BEDLAM
(January 21, 1995; beat Mickey Doyle; Taylor, MI)

MIDWEST TERRITORIAL WRESTLING TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: RAY ROBERTS & AL SNOW
(January 21, 1995; from Chris Carter & Mohammad Saad; Taylor, MI)

NWA HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: DAN SEVERN
(February 24, 1995; from Chris Candido; Erlanger, KY)

NWA WOMEN'S CHAMPION: BAMBI
(July 26, 1994; from Peggy Lee Leather; Chattanooga, TN)

PACIFIC WRESTLING FEDERATION CHAMPION: STAN HANSEN
(March 4, 1995; from Toshiaki Kawada; Tokyo, Japan)

PACIFIC WRESTLING FEDERATION INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:
MITSUHARU MISAWA & KENTA KOBASHI
(December 10, 1994; beat Johnny Ace & Steve Williams in tournament final; Tokyo, Japan)

PLANT CITY WRESTLING FEDERATION HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: NAVY SEAL
(January 5, 1995; beat Jeff Bradley in tournament final; Plant City, FL)

POWER ZONE WRESTLING ALLIANCE OKLAHOMA CHAMPION: BONECRUSHER STEVE
(January 15, 1994; from Psycho; Moore, OK)

PRO WRESTLING FEDERATION HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: TERRY AUSTIN
(March 4, 1995; from Italian Stallion; Hamlet, NC)

PRO WRESTLING FEDERATION TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: DAMAGE INC.
(March 4, 1995; beat Star Ryder & Flaming Youth; Hamlet, NC)

RIVER CITY WRESTLING HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE: MAX IMPACT
(October 27, 1994; from Tom Steele; Winnipeg, Manitoba)

SMOKY MOUNTAIN HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: BOBBY BLAZE
(February 26, 1995; from Jerry Lawler; Knoxville, TN)

SMOKY MOUNTAIN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE ROCK 'N' ROLL EXPRESS
(December 25, 1994; from The Gangstas; Knoxville, TN)

TRI-STAR WRESTLING HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: RICHIE DYE
(January 13, 1995; won battle royal for vacant title; Rossville, GA)

TRI-STAR WRESTLING TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: KEITH HART & CHRIS STEELHEART
(January 6, 1995; from Roger Sartain & Jimmy Sharpe; Rossville, GA)

USWA HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: BILL DUNDEE
(February 25, 1995; from Jerry Lawler; Memphis, TN)

USWA SOUTHERN CHAMPION: BRIAN CHRISTOPHER
(December 31, 1994; from Tommy Rich; Memphis, TN)

USWA TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: DOUG GILBERT & TOMMY RICH
(January 14, 1995; from PG-13; Memphis, TN)

WCW TELEVISION CHAMPION: ARN ANDERSON
(January 8, 1995; from Johnny B. Badd; Atlanta, GA)

WCW U.S. CHAMPION: BIG VAN VADER
(December 27, 1994; from Hacksaw Duggan; Nashville, TN)

WCW WORLD CHAMPION: HULK HOGAN
(July 17, 1994; from Ric Flair; Orlando, FL)

WCW WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: HARLEM HEAT
(December 8, 1994; from The Patriot & Marcus Bagwell; Atlanta, GA)

WEST COAST CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: JOHNNY CANUCK
(January 28, 1995; from The Bodyguard; Cloverdale, BC)

WINDY CITY WRESTLING LIGHTWEIGHT CHAMPION: STEVE BOZ
(November 5, 1994; from Christopher Daniels; Chicago, IL)

WORLD WIDE WRESTLING ALLIANCE TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: TITLE VACANT
(Most recently held by The Diamond Express)

WORLD WRESTLING ALLIANCE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: NIKOLAI VOLKOFF
(February 4, 1995; from Frank Finnegan; Clementon, NJ)

WORLD WRESTLING ALLIANCE TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: BAD ATTITUDE
(November 5, 1994; from Duane & Wayne Gill; Clementon, NJ)

WWA FRONTIER MARTIAL ARTS CHAMPION: MR. ONITA
(September 19, 1992; from Tiger Jeet Singh; Yokohama, Japan)

WWF INTERCONTINENTAL CHAMPION: JEFF JARRETT
(January 22, 1995; from Razor Ramon; Tampa, FL)

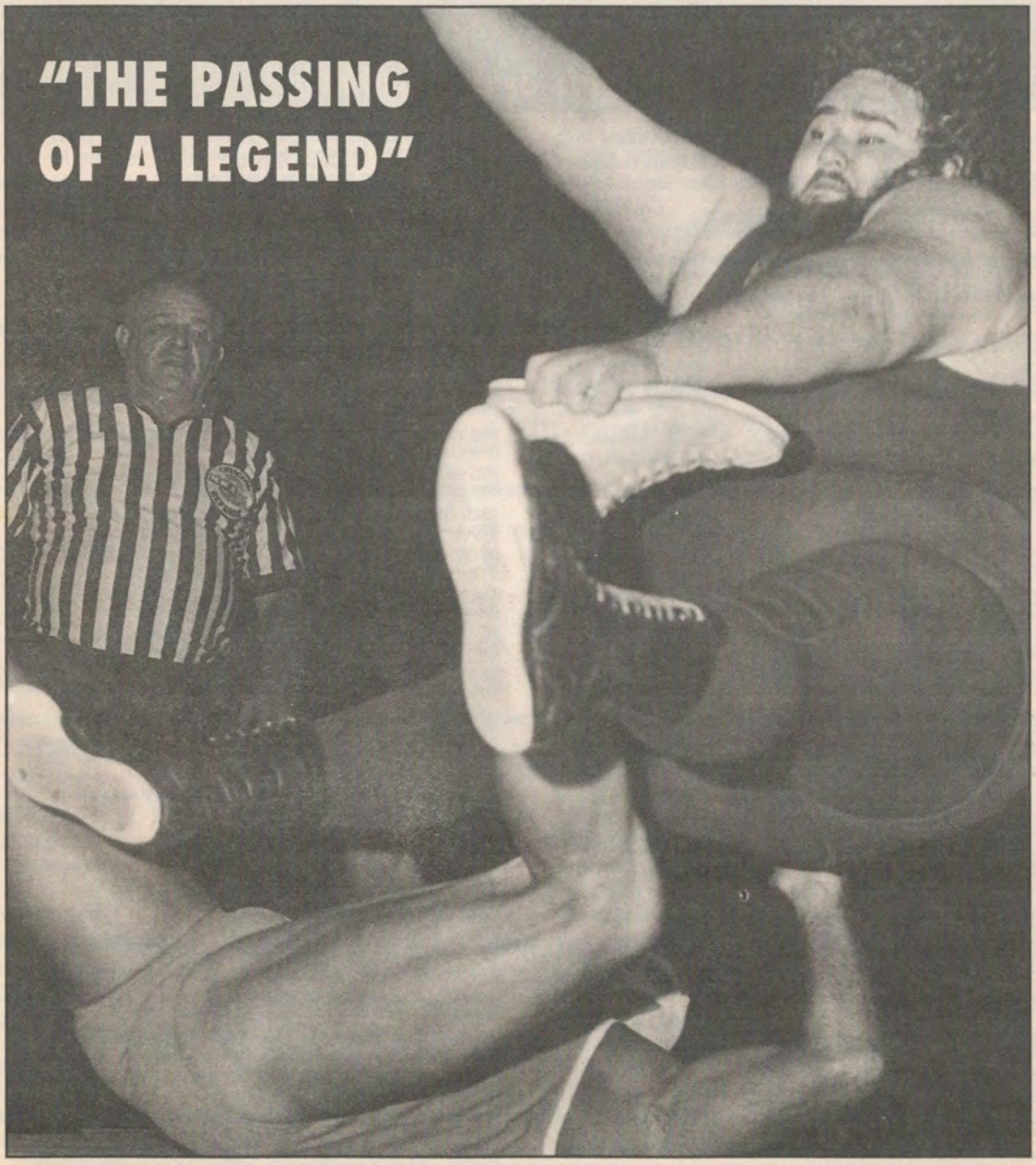
WWF WORLD WOMEN'S CHAMPION: BULL NAKANO
(November 20, 1994; from Alundra Blayze; Tokyo, Japan)

WWF WORLD CHAMPION: DIESEL
(November 26, 1994; from Bob Backlund; New York, NY)

WWF WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE SMOKIN' GUNNS
(January 23, 1995; from Bob Holly & The Kid; Palmetto, FL)

BLAST FROM THE PAST

This Month In Wrestling History



JERRY "CRUSHER" BLACKWELL vs. THE AVENGER
May 1977

Crusher Blackwell, who died at the age of 45 in January, will be remembered as one of the sport's all-time best big men. He may have weighed more than 450 pounds during much of his career, but the man was truly an amazing athlete. His aerial attack dumbfounded many an opponent, including the masked Avenger. When he connected with a powerful legdrop off the ropes, his opponents *didn't* get up.

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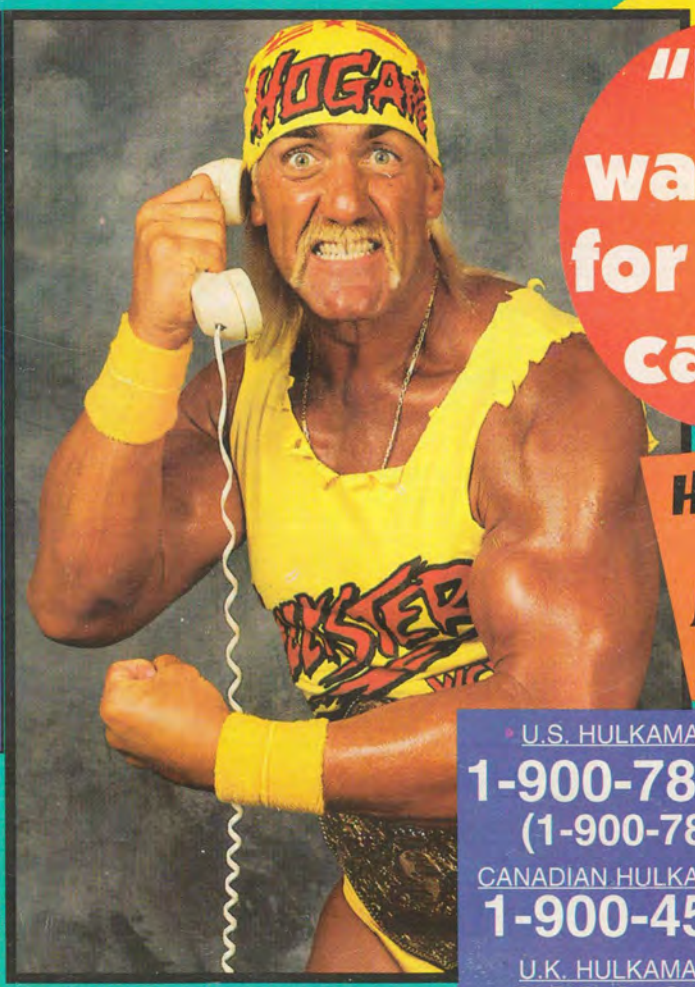

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